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Working Paper No. 28

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79, SECOND MAIN ROAD, GANDHINAGAR, ADYAR

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I Introduction

Iruvelpattu is a village in the South Arcot District of Tamilnadu about 12 kilometres due South of Villupuram on the Grand Southern Trunk road from Madras to Tiruchirapalli and further south to Madurai and Kanyakumari.[1/] Between Villupuram and Iruvelpattu, the road crosses the South Pennar river and just beyond the village, it crosses the Malattar which is a branch of the S. Pennar. Iruvelpattu is a medium-sized village with a population of about 1500 and an area of about 1100 acres. The village habitations and lands lie on either side of the GS Trunk road. To the west of the road and close to it is the 'main' or caste Hindu village with its population of about 1000. To the east, and a little to the interior, is the Harijan colony (or 'cheri' as it used to be called) with its population of about 500.

Prof.Gilbert Slater was appointed in December 1915 to head the newly opened Department of Economics in the University of Madras. He thought that it would be a good idea if his students could approach the study of Economics with the "central object" of understanding "the causes of and remedies for Indian poverty" rather than as "a series of unintelligible theories to be learnt parrot fashion from Marshall's *Principles*". To this end, as he says, "I determined to direct the attention of students towards the study of particular villages. Instead of endeavouring to select typical villages, I made a choice on the simple principle of taking those that were most available. I asked students of the University who were willing to help to make surveys of their native villages during the long

vacation... Some study was necessary in order to decide what questions to ask. In this I was assisted by E.V.Sundaram Reddi who accompanied me to his native village of Eruvellipet in the second week of February 1916".

Slater's original survey of Iruvelpattu was thus in the nature of a pioneering and pilot survey. It was published, along with the surveys of other villages by his students, as a collection entitled Some South Indian Villages in 1918.[2] The Madras University organised a resurvey of Slater's villages in 1936-1937 under the direction of Professors P.J.Thomas and K.C.Ramakrishnan.[3] In this round, a somewhat detailed survey of Iruvelpattu was conducted by Mr.A.K.Veeraraghavan (hereafter, AKV). The next look at the village was a relatively brief one by Dr.M.R.Haswell (MRH, hereafter) from Oxford in 1961 who recorded her impressions of Iruvelpattu and other Slater villages in her book on Economics of Development in Village India.[4]

Our resurvey was done during most of 1981 and in the first quarter of 1982 with the help of three investigators: Mr.G.Jothi, Mr.Gilbert Rodrigo and Miss R.Vasantha. They were resident in the village for a minimum of two months each. We made a few visits to the village but mainly kept in touch with the progress of field investigations through frequent meetings with the investigators. The direction of the enquiry revolved around the data and the topics covered in the previous surveys since we were particularly interested in changes with reference to what Slater (1916), AKV (1937) and MRH (1961) had observed and recorded, in addition to whatever that seemed of significance in the village society, economy and polity. With reference to information available in the earlier surveys, detailed questionnaires were canvassed on various topics. A complete census on basic demographic particulars, asset ownership and main sources of income was undertaken. Some other particulars such as cultivation costs

and the economics of pumpset irrigation were gathered on a sample basis. A relatively short exercise of this kind suffers from obvious limitations. We lacked the time to extend the enquiry in certain directions and up to certain depths. In particular, we did not gather data regarding the adoption of technology and cultivation costs and returns on a size-class basis, and we could not get into aspects of marketing. Information available in the earlier surveys was another type of constraint in studying changes. Moreover, those who expect village studies to look for "tongues in trees, sermons in stones and books in running brooks" will be disappointed; and we ourselves did not wish to treat the trees, stones and brooks of Iruvelpattu as raw material for gaining insights into the mode of production, the differentiation of the peasantry, the commercialisation of agriculture, caste and ideology, or the ecological crisis. At a methodological level, we were tempted to find out what can be achieved in a survey undertaken primarily by young investigators with some direction and supervision since we felt that Slater's impulse to direct Indian students of Indian Economics to particular villages, typical or not, was as relevant today as it was in 1916 (even though Marx may have overtaken Marshall in the meanwhile). This effort to once again try out essentially Slater's own method did not prove discouraging, although it is, of course, for the readers to judge.

II The Village : Some Social Aspects

Population

"The Census of India", it has been said, "although a remarkable institution which provides a vital and extraordinary source of information, is not proof against inaccuracies which make published census records a very blunt instrument, especially for analyses at the village

level".[5] But we must try. Population Census figures for Iruvelpattu are available from 1901 up to 1981 except for 1941 for which village level totals were not published due to war-time economy. Table 1 gives the population figures for 1901-1981. The AKV resurvey of 1937 gives the population figures for that year.

Table 1 : Population of Iruvelpattu, 1901-1981

	Male	Female	Total
1901	535	506	1041
1911	583	567	1150
1921	530	523	1053
1931	524	503	1027
1941	NA	NA	NA
1951	588	563	1151
1961	667	583	1250
1971	704	580	1284
1981	805	739	1544

Table 2 compares inter-censal growth rates in Iruvelpattu with those for S.Arcot (rural) and Tamilnadu (rural).

Table 2 : Inter-censal growth rates; Tamilnadu (rural), S.Arcot (rural) and Iruvelpattu

	Tamilnadu (rural)	S.Arcot (rural)	Iruvelpattu
1901-11	7.37	11.39	10.47
1911-21	2.56	- 2.24	- 8.44
1921-31	5.69	4.28	- 2.47
1931-51	18.54	10.55	12.07
1951-61	8.39	8.42	8.60
1961-71	16.35	16.91	2.70
1971-81	12.68	14.01	20.25

In 1911-21, Iruvelpattu had a sharp population decline of over 8 per cent and the decline had continued, although at a lower rate of about 2.5 per cent, in 1921-31 as well. One reason must have been the influenza epidemic in the post World War I period which led to widespread mortality in the whole of India. A second reason was probably emigration to Ceylon. Writing in 1916, Slater referred to emigration from Iruvelpattu but did not estimate the volume of it. Emigration, he pointed out, was "the one way of escape for the padial from his condition of servitude and poverty". He added that in a village where there seemed to be little potential for extension or intensification of agriculture or for non-agricultural occupations, "the natural increase of population tends to be balanced by emigration". Emigration to Ceylon does not seem to have persisted beyond the 1920s as AKV notes in 1937 that "for the last 20 years none has left the village as cooly for overseas plantations". We too did not find any instances of repatriates from Sri Lanka

in Iruvelpattu although there were some in the adjoining villages. Nor was there evidence of remittances from, or of connections in, Sri Lanka.

Between 1931 and 1961, population growth rates in Iruvelpattu have been generally in accord with those for rural S.Arcot but the growth rate in the 1960s is noticeably lower. The reason for this has to be found in emigration. AKV's resurvey of 1937 and the census figures from 1961 onwards contain separate population totals for Caste Hindus and Harijans which are reproduced in Table 3.

Table 3 : Caste Hindu and Harijan Population

	Caste Hindus	Harijans
1937	692	418
1961	778	472
1971	874	410
1981	1074	470

Between 1937 and 1961, the population growth rate for Caste Hindus (12.4 per cent) and for Harijans (12.9 per cent) was about the same. In the 1960s, the Harijan population declined by over 13 per cent while the Caste Hindu population increased by 12.3 per cent. In the 1970s, the Harijan population has increased by about 15 per cent while the Caste Hindu population grew by nearly 23 per cent. A lower rate of natural increase among the Harijans as the resultant of a higher death rate and a somewhat lower birth rate could be a partial explanation.6/ But this will not explain the changes since 1937-61 or the differences between 1961-71 and 1971-81. The 1960s seem clearly to have been

a decade of high emigration for the Harijans and migration seems to have slowed down in the 1970s. On a 1961 population base of 472, an annual emigration of 2 or 3 Harijan families could explain the difference between a growth of 12 per cent, and the decline by a like amount that is noticed in 1961-71. Our enquiries revealed that a number of Harijan families had in fact left some 15 years ago for work in the coffee plantations of Chickmagalur in Karnataka and relatives and friends continue to follow in a trickle. In addition, young men from the colony went for cooly work to Madras and Bangalore returning to the village for short periods. On the other hand, there was little evidence of any recent migration from the caste village.

Slater's estimates for 1912-14 of the Crude Birth Rate (CBR) was 35.4 and of the Crude Death Rate (CDR) was 26 (per 1000 in each case). The CDR seems to have remained at the same level two decades later in AKV's figures for 1935 and 1936 which work out to 27 per 1000. Slater found in 1916 that births and deaths "were being recorded accurately". AKV's only complaint in 1937 was that the "Munsiff does not take pains to get at the correct cause of death, but simply classified deaths under the 'other causes' as the easiest way out". In recent years, the population and vital statistics maintained by the village Munsif have become much less reliable. According to village records, the present population was 2000, significantly higher than the census figure of 1544. In the three years 1978, 1979 and 1980, the annual average deaths recorded were 6 and births were 21. Both were clearly under-reported and deaths more than births. Leaving aside the Harijan population which has been subject to emigration, one can notice that the caste Hindus have nearly doubled their rate of growth in the 1970s with reference to the previous decade. To what precise extent this reflects falling death rates has to be a matter of speculation but some decline in mortality among caste Hindus could be

hypothesised due to their improved access to health and water supply facilities in the village in the last decade.

Sex ratios in Iruvelpattu (number of females per 1000 males) have been consistently lower than corresponding figures for Tamilnadu as Table 4 will show.

Table 4 : Sex ratios in Tamilnadu and Iruvelpattu 1901-1981

	Tamilnadu	Iruvelpattu
1901	1044	946
1911	1042	973
1921	1029	987
1931	1027	960
1941	1012	NA
1951	1007	957
1961	992	874
1971	978	824
1981	978	918

The ratio has also steadily declined between 1901 and 1971 but has distinctly improved in the last decade. In the last two decades, for which separate figures for the caste village and the colony are available, the sex ratio in the colony has been higher than that among Caste Hindus as Table 5 will show.

Table 5 : Sex ratios for Caste Hindus and Harijans 1961-1981

	Caste Hindus	Harijans
1961	860	898
1971	821	830
1981	898	967

The age-group wise analysis of the sex ratio in Table 6 shows that the Harijans have an adverse ratio in comparison with caste Hindus in the 0-4 age group presumably due to higher female infant mortality. In all other age groups, the sex ratio is higher for Harijans. Male emigration among Harijans would be one but may not be the only explanation. As a wage earner, the Harijan woman is more of an economic asset than her caste Hindu counterpart and this may operate to ensure her a higher potential for survival.[7/]

Table 6 : Age-group wise sex ratios for caste Hindus and Harijans in 1981

Age group	Caste Hindus	Harijans
0 - 4	1043	793
5 - 14	805	1018
15 - 39	923	1373
40 -	611	711

The caste composition of Iruvelpattu's population is shown in Table 7.

Table 7 : Caste Composition in 1937 and 1981

(persons)

	1937	1981
Reddiars	57	46
Vanniars and other Caste Hindus	635	1028
Harijans	416	470
Total	1110	1544

Harijans constitute about 30 per cent of the population. Among the rest, Vanniars are numerically preponderant. The "dominant" caste in terms of landholding, economic power and social prestige is however that of the Reddiars. The Reddiars are originally migrants from Andhra Pradesh and are to be widely found in Chengalpattu, N.Arcot and S.Arcot districts of Tamilnadu. According to local tradition in Iruvelpattu, the Reddiars are reported to have moved in and acquired land in this village early in the 19th Century. The Vanniars (also known here as Goundars) are an important and populous farming community in Tamilnadu to be found mainly in its northern districts. The comparison between 1937 and 1981 in Table 7 will show that while the Reddiar population has declined and the Harijan population has grown by only 15 per cent in more than four decades, the middle castes have constituted a non-migrant and growing element. There are no Muslims or Christians in the village. The Brahmin population is only 8, being the two temple priests and their families. At the time of the original settlement in 1890, there were however about a dozen landowning Brahmin families in the village.

Education

Slater makes a brief reference to the existence of a primary school in Iruvelpattu in 1916 with 67 boys and 7 girls on the rolls, graded in five standards and managed by the Headmaster and his two assistants, both men. The school must have been in existence even earlier. Our oldest informant, a Nattanmaikarar (village elder) recalled being in school at the turn of the century when classes began every morning with all the children shouting "Greetings to Kind Edward" in chorus. The school that AKV found in 1937 had shrunk in size. There were only 35 boys and 5 girls on the rolls; daily attendance varied from 20 to 25; and there were only 2 teachers. AKV also noted: "The boys of the cheri

do not attend school. Though they are entitled to be admitted, parents are afraid to send their boys to school. But they are keen on a school of their own... but fear keeps them down from giving vent to their feelings".

Educational facilities in Iruvelpattu have not expanded beyond the primary school, but the school itself has a much larger enrolment and attendance. There are now 119 boys and 81 girls, or a total of 200 children, on the rolls. Of them, 44 boys and 21 girls are from the Harijan colony. The Harijans have no fear of sending their children to school except that their children have to cross the trunk road, with its heavy traffic, in reaching and returning from it. In 1981, daily attendance has been at the level of 128, or 64 per cent of enrolment with the figures for boys and girls being 66 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. There are no great variations in attendance from one month to another or as between children from the caste village and the colony. However, attendance is low (about 40 per cent) in class II while it is in the range of 60 to 70 per cent in other classes. (We discuss this phenomenon later.) The school is housed in a new building constructed in 1980 by the Panchayat, very close to the trunk road, in the caste village. With all five classes being in one large room (40 feet by 25 feet), the noise level, exogenous from the road and from within, is high. It is sought to be reduced by the teachers alternating teaching, reading and writing among the classes so that voices do not clash at the same time. There are 5 teachers including a woman teacher. On the basis of enrolment, the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:40 as required by the rules but in terms of attendance it is only about 1:25.

With reference to the number of children in the age group 5-9, school enrolment figures are high. In the caste village, there are 76 boys and 64 girls in this age group

and there are 75 boys and 60 girls on the rolls of the school in classes I to V. The corresponding figures for the colony are 30 boys and 29 girls in the 5-9 age group with 44 boys and 21 girls being in school. These figures are prima facie impressive but do not mean much because attendance, as we saw, is only about two-thirds of enrolment and drop outs are high.

Table 8 gives the proportion of males and females separately for Caste Hindus and Harijans who had at all gone to school in Iruvelpattu. This could be taken as an index of literacy, although it is not identical with it.[8]

Table 8 : Proportion of population who have received schooling

(per cent)

	Male	Female	Total
Caste Hindus	54.7	26.7	42.1
Harijans	13.7	6.7	10.2
Total	43.3	20.2	32.5

For the village as a whole, 32.5 per cent of the population had received schooling comparing with a 1981 literacy figure of 36.0 per cent in S.Arcot and 45.8 per cent in Tamilnadu. This makes Iruvelpattu somewhat of a backward village, literacy-wise, in a distinctly backward district of the State. Wide differentials are to be noticed as between Caste Hindus and Harijans and once again as between males and females. 42.1 per cent of Caste Hindus have been to school but only 10.2 per cent of the Harijans. The schooling proportion for males is 43.3 per cent by only 20.2 per cent for females. Among Caste Hindus, the male and female proportions are 54.7 per

cent and 26.7 per cent respectively; among Harijans the corresponding figures are as low as 13.7 per cent (males) and 6.7 per cent (females). MRH mentions in passing that "at the time of Independence, the rate of literacy in Iruvelpattu was only 3 per cent". The basis for this statement is not known but it is plausible that in the last three decades literacy has significantly increased. However, the disparity between Caste Hindus and Harijans, and the still abysmally low level of schooling in the case of Harijan females are striking.

Different levels of schooling undergone by Caste Hindus and Harijans is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 : Schooling levels of Caste Hindus and Harijans

er cent)

Up to	Caste Hindus	Harijans
Primary	64.5	64.3
Middle	18.2	28.6
Secondary (SSLC)	15.5	7.1
Degree	1.8	---
	100.0	100.0

Of those who had gone to school at all, the proportion of Harijan children who have gone beyond the primary stage is about the same when compared with Caste Hindus but few Harijans go beyond the middle school level (Class VIII) to reach the school-leaving stage (SSLC or Class X). There are a number of SSLCs and a few graduates from the caste village. The colony has produced no graduates so far, and only 7 SSLCs in all its history as far as could be ascertained.

In 1937, AKV found that 6 students from Iruvelpattu were attending a Higher Elementary School in a nearby village. In 1981, there were as many as 50 boys and girls from Iruvelpattu in middle and secondary levels in schools in the surrounding villages and 4 in colleges in such places as Villupuram, Chidambaram and Tiruvannamalai. Except for one boy from the colony, the rest of them belonged to the caste village.

Attendance, as mentioned earlier, is 64 per cent of enrolment and drop-outs at different stages of school come to about 25 per cent of attendance overall and 40 per cent among the Harijans. In other words, only about 48 per cent of children enrolled in Class I passed out eventually from Class V. This proportion dropped to about 23 per cent in the case of Harijan children. Drop outs as well as absenteeism from Class II were particularly heavy. Most of the girls and a large number of boys from the colony left school at this stage. With two years of schooling, their 'literacy' level would be quite limited. We were told that by class II, the girls had become old enough (age 7 or 8) to look after younger children and the boys were in demand for minding cattle. This has, of course, always been the case. AKV pointed out in 1937: "Generally, all the boys in the family do not attend school. Some help their fathers by tending cattle, cutting grass for cattle, and carrying meals to their fathers working in the fields. Some even take a hand in the ploughing." The difference in 1981 might however be that the more affluent Caste Hindu families retain their boys in school and employ Harijan boys to mind the cattle. Under-education in the colony thus supports better education in the caste village.

We had the opportunity to watch the working of two Government schemes in the school. Seventy children, 48 from the caste village and 22 from the colony, were given mid-day meals in the school. All ate together and there

was no discrimination against the Harijan children in the provision or the serving of the meal but the few Reddiar children in school always went home to eat. The second was the supply of books to children in classes I to III and to Harijan children in classes IV and V as well. The coverage was only about 50 per cent in this scheme and the books were distributed about 3 months after commencement of school, too late to be of much use. The cost of books, notebooks and clothes were clearly a deterrent in making it to school for children from the colony and from poorer homes in the caste village.

The Habitat

Both the caste village and the colony in Iruvelpattu are congested. The ratio of households to houses, has worsened from about 1.1 in 1961 to 1.4 in 1981 in the village as a whole. There are 192 houses in the caste village in a natham (or house-site) area of 7.34 acres, effectively 5.34 acres after allowing for one large house, the school, the post office, temples, streets etc. This gives about 3 cents per house. The colony is better endowed in terms of overall space but the huts, of course, are much smaller than the houses in the caste village. The caste village gives a much stronger impression of crowdedness also because in many houses the cattle are kept in the premises. More sanitary surroundings are one compensation for the Harijans, few of whom own cattle.

In the caste village, Slater referred to one house which was "imposing, with two stories, a flat roof, a covered approach, ornamental iron gates and pillars adorned with paintings". This house built in 1901 belongs to the Big Landlord (BL, of whom we shall have much to say later). BL's house has an extensive garden. On the opposite side of the main street on which it is located, there is a large enclosure for cattle, implements, trucks, tractors and farm

storage. BL also owns about 35 smaller houses in the village and most of the salaried officials such as the postmaster, cane inspector, teachers and so on are his tenants. For the rest, AKV found in 1937 that 20 houses were tiled and the majority were thatched. In our count, 11 were terraced, 19 tiled and 162 thatched. 53 houses in the caste village or about a quarter had individual electricity connections. There were 11 street lights in the caste village.

Slater's description of the 'pariah village' in contrast with the caste village in 1916 could be true of the present: "It has no streets, only paths worn smooth by the pressure of bare feet..... Houses are made of a framework of sticks, the roofs thatched with palm leaves, and the walls also woven, as it were, of leaves and twigs. These dwellings are dark inside. The floor is bare earth. There is little privacy here. Men, women and children live in the open air." None of the huts in the colony is electrified and there are only 3 street lights located at the street corners. The Harijans are highly vulnerable in their access to house sites. Of the 90 huts in the colony only 9 are in 1.5 acres of natham poramboke (common house-site) classified as such in the revenue records. About 40 are in 4 acres of land belonging to BL, mostly occupied by his farm servants. The other 40 are located in Malattar river poramboke on the skirts of the river. The latter are technically encroachments, rarely if ever subject to flooding but constantly to the threat of eviction from the village <u>karnam</u> (accountant), acting on his own or at the behest of officials who need the land for "social" purposes such as farm forestry. There was a fire in the colony in 1968 which destroyed a number of huts and some interest was reported to have been shown at that time by the revenue officials in acquiring house-sites for the Harijans. Nothing came of this because BL, fearing the possible acquisition of his

lands, opposed the proposal. He even arranged for a petition to be submitted by some of the Harijans that they were not in need of house-sites! In all these years, Government schemes for the allotment of house-sites, acquisition of house-sites, construction of houses, and loans for housing to Harijans have all by-passed the Iruvelpattu colony. As far as the Harijans are concerned, vulnerability also extends in respect of thatching material such as sugar cane tops and reeds (vizhal) which are used for roofing and for its repair. BL is almost the sole source for the former and the reeds, although grown in the village tank, can be removed from there only with his formal permission. We found however that while BL had been keen on maintaining the continued dependency of the Harijans on him for house-sites and thatching material, he had rarely exploited it. We heard no accounts of threats of eviction, or of denial of sugarcane tops and of reeds, but then sanctions do not have to be invoked if dependency itself succeeds in ensuring good behaviour; and many Harijans expressed fear of eviction if they were to alienate BL.

The contrast between the caste village and the colony in housing and electricity was even more glaring when it came to water supply. In Slater's time, and as late as AKV's resurvey in 1937, "most of the people used the water from the spring channel for drinking purposes. The higher classes, however, get the water at the springs in which the spring channel takes its source in the bed of the river." It was, therefore, a transformation to find that in the caste village there was a well with an electric pump and an overhead tank (circa 1961 constructed by the Panchayat) serving 8 street connections and 41 private house connections. Water supply was available for 3 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon. These public facilities were supplemented by 7 private hand pumps and 6 private drinking water wells.

Slater found only one well in the colony and was petitioned for one more by the Harijans in 1916. In 1937 again AKV observed that "in the Cheri there is only one well which supplies drinking water to the whole population, and the well in the morning attracts a large crowd." There has been no improvement since AKV's time either except that the old well was replaced with a new one in 1960. A pump and a ground-level reservoir with four taps were added in 1978 and the pump was commissioned after a year's delay in 1979 when electricity connection became available. For 6 months in the summer of 1981, the well had gone dry. The Harijans were fetching water for cooking and drinking purposes from private irrigation wells in a range of ½ to 2 kilometres and 5 trips a day were estimated to be required for a larger family.[9/]

In the matter of sanitation however there is little contrast between caste and colony. BL has his private toilets but apart from him no one else in the caste village. There are two latrines in the street but they were not in use and reported to be kept for "visitors". The colony had none at all. Slater referred to the belief that "the most fitting and seemly solution of one sanitary question is to use the river bed as a latrine" as an "article of faith firmly held in the village". This seems to have held good in the last several decades.

Health[10/]

Cholera was very much prevalent in Iruvelpattu upto about the mid-1930s. In 1912-14, Slater found that it accounted for about a fourth of the deaths. In 1937, AKV noted with satisfaction that "the village has been free from Cholera and malaria for the past 3 years". Cholera has continued to be extinct but we heard accounts of the sporadic incidence of malaria. This was traced to young men who

returned from cooly work in Madras or Bangalore. Common diseases diagnosed in the Primary Health Centre were anaemia, hookworm (particularly affecting agricultural labour), malnutrition, gastro-enteritis, scabies, worms, diarrohea and 'fevers'.

Allopathic medicine played no role in Iruvelpattu in 1937. AKV pointed out: "All diseases are treated by the native doctors with the help of herbs... Mantrams play a very important part in the treatment of snake bites and even fever". The village still has its corps of native doctors in 4 manthravadis and a Siddha Vaidyar. However, they are not much patronised and allegiance has almost wholly shifted to allopathy encouraged, no doubt, by the establishment of a Primary Health Centre (PHC) in the village in 1969. This came about largely because of the efforts of BL who was then a member of the State Legislative Assembly. The PHC is located adjacent to the caste village with its full complement of buildings, including staff quarters.

We encountered a number of complaints about the functioning of the PHC -- not necessarily about the current state of affairs but over the years. The main types of complaints were : (i) Some of the doctors never took up residence in the village. (ii) the PHC was closed for out-patients after about 2 hours of opening in the mornings and patients who turned up later were treated as "private cases" and charged Rs.5 per consultation. (iii) Patients, particularly from the colony, were treated rudely. (iv) There was leakage of drugs and misuse of the van and (v) The Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs) charged for deliveries, Rs.25 in the caste village and Rs.10 in the colony. In any event, most deliveries in the colony were attended to by a traditional dai. This particular woman believed in giving a stiff dose of country liquor to the mother immediately after child-birth as a pain-killer,

sedative and anti-biotic. The PHC had carried out a couple of innoculation drives for cholera and one family planning camp.

We found that there were frequent vacancies and a high turnover among the doctors posted to the PHC. Of the 3 Medical Officers (MOs) including a woman (M.O.), the third MO's post was filled only for a fortnight in the 12 years of its functioning. The male doctor's post was vacant for a total of 3 years during various periods; 6 doctors had held it for the remaining 9 years, two between themselves for 7 years and 4 others for a total of 2 years or 6 months on an average. There seems to have been more continuity in the case of the lady M.O. This post was vacant for 2 years; in the remaining 10 years, it has been held by 5 incumbents.

III The Village Economy

Land utilisation

The total area of the village is 1131 acres of which (including current fallows) 518 acres are classified as 'wet', 173 acres as 'dry' and 440 acres as '*poramboke*' or communal lands. The latter is accounted for mainly by the village tank (235 acres), the Malattar and its spring channel (135 acres) and the road (24 acres). The main soil type in the village is black loam in the wet lands and red loam and sand in the dry lands. There are no forests in the village, no communal grazing ground and only a small common threshing floor. Encroachments are to be found on the communal lands mainly in the form of small shops and some houses on the road, the huts of the Harijan colony referred to earlier in the Malattar river fringe, and some paddy cultivation in the tank bed, the largest of which is by a member of the Panchayat President's family. We found that 94 per cent of the cultivable area of about 690 acres was sown in contrast to MRH's

observation in 1961 that about 20 per cent had been left fallow because "no attempt was made to cultivate dry areas dependant solely on rainfall".[11/]

Based on the previous surveys and the village registers for 1968 to 1978, Table 10 sets out the cropping pattern in Iruvelpattu at four different points of time beginning with the original settlement in 1890.

Table 10 : Cropping pattern

(per cent of gross area)

	1890	1920-21	1935-36	1968-78
Paddy	76	78	82	87
Millets	10	8	8	2
Groundnut	3	4	4	2
Sugarcane	-	1	4	5
Others	11	9	2	4

Paddy has continued to be the dominant crop and has increased its share over the years. Area under millets and groundnut has gone down and that under sugar cane has increased. These are proportions to the gross cropped area and the significant fact is that, due to groundwater exploitation, there has been a sizable increase in the intensity of cropping. In 1937, for instance, AKV reported that while 644 acres were under a single crop, 41 acres or just over 6 per cent of that area yielded a second crop. The sowing of a short duration second paddy crop viz., sornavari after the main samba crop depended on the availability of water. Only 6 acres were under sugar-cane and AKV pointed out that "the fact that it is a twelve month's crop, requiring water throughout, stands in the way

of its becoming more popular". At present about 40 per cent of the area under paddy is under a second crop and in many fields, a third crop of groundnut, millets or gingelly is grown. Likewise, the area under sugarcane has expanded to about 45 acres.

The main paddy crop is samba planted in July-August and harvested in December-January. It is followed by navarai which is also of paddy, or of paddy combined with a millet like ragi. Navarai is usually harvested in April. A short-term summer crop can follow between April and July if conditions are favourable but it is generally devoted to millets (ragi or cumbu) and gingelly. The summer crop is known as kuruvai in Iruvelpattu and corresponds to sornavari as more widely known elsewhere in Tamilnadu. There is widespread adoption of high-yielding seed varieties in the village among which IR20 and Ponni are the most popular for samba and TKM 9 for navarai. There is a government seed farm in the village and its local presence has helped a great deal in popularising high yielding seed varieties. AKV's account indicates that in 1937 mainly traditional varieties such as Chinna samba and Sirumani were used although improved varieties such as GEB 22 and 28 were also prevalent. MRH is silent on seed varieties, although many improved seed varieties had come into vogue by the early 1960s.[12]

The richer landholders with access to pumpsets were obviously the ones that benefited most from multiple cropping. The same was true of a highly remunerative crop like sugarcane. Out of 45 acres under sugarcane, over 40 acres had been planted by BL. Casuarina is another good income yielder. Here again it was BL, with enough land to spare for raising a fuel coupe, who could benefit most. Out of 44 acres under Casuarina in Iruvelpattu, 40 belonged to him. In BL's case, the ceiling legislation of 1961 which provided exemption to lands under sugarcane and under fuel trees would also have been a factor.[13]

As might be expected, the adoption of the new technology of improved seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, and more reliable and better irrigation from wells, has increased yields. Slater did not record yields in 1916 but AKV reported in 1937 that yields were around 30 to 40 kalams of paddy per cawni.[14] This would mean an average of 1129 Kg or about 1.1 tonnes per acre. It seems high and was perhaps realised by the more progressive farmers. In 1961, MRH recorded that "landholders who had the capital to combine irrigation with fertiliser use secured an average of 3.5 tons per hectare". This would be equivalent to 1.4 tonnes of paddy per acre. We found that in holdings where pumpset irrigation and the new technology were combined, yields in the main samba crop converged around 2.3 tonnes of paddy per acre (i.e., 31 bags of 75 Kg each) representing more than a doubling with reference to the 1937 level and a 64 per cent increase in the last two decades with reference to MRH's figure. This level of productivity was reported by a number of pumpset-using farmers cultivating 2 to 3 acres. It is nearly twice the official figure for the average yield in Tamilnadu of around 1.2 tonnes or 16 bags of paddy per acre. The latter figure was, however, close to the range of 15 to 20 bags per acre which smaller farmers, with upto 2 acres, growing paddy with water from the tank were able to achieve. Minimum yields reported were as low as 6 bags (450 Kg) per acre.[15]

Irrigation

The average annual rainfall in Iruvelpattu, according to readings maintained in the Seed Farm, has been 908 mm in the last 11 years with about two-thirds of it being received during the Northeast Monsoon (October-December). In 9 out of 11 years rainfall has been close to, or above, this average but in two years (viz., 1974 and 1980) it was as low as about 550 mm. The traditional sources of irrigation in Iruvelpattu have been the tank, the spring channel taking off from the

Malattar, and surplus waters draining off from the wet lands of the upper village of Thenmangalam. In the village records, 327 acres are classified as being served by the tank, 185 acres by the spring channel and 30 acres under Thenmangalam drainage. In actual fact, the spring channel has silted up and there is now no irrigation under it. One account was that heavy siltation occurred in 1971 during the floods and the channel had not been cleared up since then; another was that it had gone dry due to the numerous irrigation wells dug in the village in the 1960s and 1970s. In any event, of the old irrigation sources, it is the tank that still continues as one. It is mainly rain-fed and supplemented by some flow from the Pennar river through the Reddy channel which extends for some 15 miles between the tank and its take-off point on the river. In a normal year, with a rainfall about 900 to 1000 mm., it has supply of water for 5 to 6 months and can support one crop of paddy by itself and one more if supplemented by a well. The tank lies to the west of the Madras-Tiruchirrapalli trunk road and its ayacut (or command area) is to the east of the road. It has two open sluices at the northern and southern ends. In 1937, AKV had found that the channels were being kept free of silt under the kudimaramat (or 'repair by ryots') system and that "the moral pressure put upon the people is always sufficient to compel the families owning land to contribute their respective share of labour". In Iruvelpattu, as in the rest of Tamilnadu, kudimaramat has become a thing of the past. Periodically, however, desilting has been organised through hired labour. Emergency repairs to the bund are done by mobilising the entire village as was the case during the last floods when the Panchayat President gave the call. The sluices are operated by two kambakkarans (literally, holders of the stick). By custom, they have to be Harijans and rotate from amongst four families in the colony who have the right to this function. The kambakarans change every year and are paid 10 bags of paddy between them. The sluice shutters are

merely opened and shut during the season. There is no detailed regulation by means of a turn system or an order of priority among the ayacutdars. In years of poor rainfall, the water in the tank is pumped out with oil engines, largely to the benefit of those owning lands near the sluice.

Pumpsets

In the 1960s and 1970s in Iruvelpattu, as elsewhere in Tamil Nadu, groundwater utilisation through wells fitted with electric pumpsets has amounted to a development of major significance.[16/] There must have been a few wells in the village in Slater's time for he refers to the picottah standing out "conspicuously in the comparative treelessness of the landscape". In 1937, AKV counted 32 wells in the village but only 3 of them were being used for irrigation and were worked with kavalais (bullock-drawn lift). In 1958, Iruvelpattu got electric supply and by 1961, MRH found 17 electric pumpsets in operation.

In 1981, we found as many as 78 wells in private ownership of which 65 were electrified and 13 were operated with oil engines. Of these, 41 had been electrified during 1958 to 1969 and 24 in the 1970s, two thirds of them by 1972. BL owned 22 electric pumpsets and 6 oil engines or more than a third of all the pumpsets in the village. He had also been an early adopter of this new technology having acquired 16 electric pumpsets by 1962 and the balance during 1969-1971. Most of the pumpsets are 5 h.p. and 8 of them which were 7.5 or 10 h.p. are owned by BL. Only 4 of the pumpsets had been acquired with loans from the Cooperative Land Development Bank; about an equal number were financed with private loans and in a couple of cases by sale of land; all the rest i.e., about 90 per cent of the total were financed by the own resources of the landowners. In Tamil Nadu, ground water clearance in terms of the spacing of wells has to be obtained to qualify for a Land Development Bank loan for digging a well or acquiring a

pumpset. Subsequently, in the early 1970s, electric connection to pumpsets was also made subject to groundwater clearance. Most wells in Iruvelpattu were put up by the early 1970s and with the own resources of landowners. Since 1972, a waiting list has accumulated and there are now 15 applicants on it. The richer landowners have thus been able to avail themselves of the benefits of electricity untrammelled by regulation and have, in the process, effectively privatised ground water. It is the late-comers, and particularly the less affluent who depend on land development loans, that are subjected to "groundwater discipline".

The water table in Iruvelpattu varies according to the location of the land and the seasonal rainfall. In summer, in dry lands near the spring channel it is in the range of 45 to 60 feet. Elsewhere it can go down to 90 feet. In the rainy season, it can improve to 20 to 25 feet. It was the impression of many farmers that over the years the water table had declined somewhat but there was no serious concern as yet that ground water was being over-exploited. On an average, each well irrigates 2 to 3 acres. This would mean that about 200 acres, or about 30 per cent of net sown area in Iruvelpattu, are under pumpset irrigation. Depending on the water requirements and duration of the crop, the pumps are in operation for 6 to 8 hours per day for a total period of 8 months in a year. At current tariffs, the average cost of electricity per acre per month is Rs.30 or Rs.600 per annum for a well irrigating 2.5 acres for 8 months. Many of those who own pumpsets, particularly the smaller landowners, are not able to utilise the full potential of their well largely because of fragmentation. Consequently, there is much selling and buying of water. Excluding BL, about 50 per cent of other pump owners sell water. The charges they collect are Rs.1000 to 1500 per acre per crop if paid in cash depending on the competition; if paid in kind, one-third of the gross yield is the standard rate.[17] At current prices and yields, the latter would amount to about Rs.1140 per acre for the main paddy crop.

At current prices, the fixed investment cost for a pump owner is Rs.6000 on the pump and Rs.2000 on the pump-shed or Rs.8000 in all. Interest at 15 per cent and depreciation at 5 per cent on this sum will together work out to Rs.1600 per annum. One might add Rs.600 for the electricity bill, Rs.300 for repairs and maintenance, and Rs.500 for a watchman. Thus the total operating costs can be estimated as Rs.3000 related to irrigating 2.5 acres for 8 months. This means a cost of Rs.150 per acre per month. Assuming that water is sold for 4 months, the monthly realisation from sales would be Rs.285 or 190 per cent of the cost incurred. A large subsidy is thus involved in the current agricultural tariff for electricity, at least in the conditions of Iruvelpattu.[18/] Furthermore, this subsidy is to the richer farmer who invests in the pumpset rather than to the ultimate user. The sale of water also provides a valuable supplementary income so long as the investment costs could be afforded besides providing an adjustment to small and fragmented operational holdings.

Cost of cultivation

Neither Slater nor MRH give any information on costs of cultivation. There are however scattered observations in AKV's resurvey in 1937 which could be pieced together to obtain some orders of magnitude in relation to cultivation expenses in the late 1930s i.e., well before the advent of the new technology. AKV, for instance, has furnished estimates of yield (viz., 30 to 40 *kalams* per *cawni*), harvest prices (2 Rs 4 as per *kalam*), the seed rate (1/3 bag per acre), the quantum of organic manure (80 bags costing rupee one per 20 bags) and gives a figure for all inclusive costs, excluding land revenue, of Rs.15 per acre. Using these estimates, Table 11-A has been constructed to represent the data for 1937.

There are difficulties in the collection, presentation and comparison of data on cultivation costs. As with output estimates, variability is high; and this is compounded by recall lapses and respondents' biases. In presenting the data, judgements need to be made on elements such as imputed costs (e.g. for use of family labour and owned cattle), prices at which kind costs should be converted into cash and the items on which and the rates at which financial costs such as depreciation and interest should be allowed for. The scope for comparisons with estimates in other studies is limited because of differences in the conditions of cultivation, in relative prices which depend on the time and place of the survey, and other differences which make it impossible to arrive at a like-for-like basis.

For our purpose, we thought it would be useful to get data for one standardised and typical case and have its reliability checked by detailed interrogation and cross-verification with as many similar cases as possible. The "type" we were able to get at was a farmer with 3 acres of land and an owned pumpset, growing paddy with the use of the new technology (HYV, fertilisers and pesticides) and pumpset irrigation on 'wet' land, and getting his cultivation done with the use of hired labour. Ploughing was done with hired bullocks, there was no use of tractor, and the application of chemical fertilisers was equal to the recommended dosage.[19/] His figures were cross-verified with those of four other farmers who, more or less, shared the same characteristics of cultivation. Table 11-B presents the data for this case for the main samba crop. In addition to cash costs, we have allowed for depreciation (5 per cent) and interest (15 per cent) on the pumpset and pump house (Rs.8000) for a period of 5 months. In working out paddy units, the market price prevailing at the time of harvest at Rs.110 per bag of paddy was used.

Table 11-A : Costs of cultivation per acre of paddy in 1937

Item	Rs.	Per cent to total cost	Paddy units (tonnes)
1. Wages	10.00	46	0.21
2. Seed	1.13	6	0.03
3. Organic manure	4.00	18	0.09
4. Land Revenue (including cesses and surcharges)	6.66	30	0.14
Total costs	21.79	100	0.47
Gross output	52.00		1.11
Net surplus	30.21		0.64

Table 11-B : Costs of cultivation per acre of paddy in 1981

Item	Rs.	Per cent to total costs	Paddy units (tonnes)
1. Wages	456	24.8	0.31
2. Seed	120	6.5	0.08
3. Organic manure	150	8.1	0.10
4. Fertilisers	419	22.8	0.29
5. Pesticides	168	9.1	0.11
6. Electricity	503	27.3	0.34
a) Tariff 120			
b) Operation and maintenance 160			
c) Depreciation 56			
d) Interest 167			
7. Land revenue (including cesses and surcharges)	25	1.4	0.02
Total	1841	100.0	1.25
Gross output	3440		2.33
Net output	1599		1.08

Some conclusions can be attempted by comparing Tables 11-A and 11-B recognising that both are stylised presentations of costs and returns on paddy cultivation before and after pumpsets and the new technology. In view of the lack of statistical validity, the conclusions can only be of a broad directional, rather than of any precise magnitudinal nature, but nevertheless of some suggestive interest.

1. The combination of pumpset irrigation and the new technology has significantly increased the gross output. But attendant costs have also been heavy. In real terms the comparison suggests that while gross output has more than doubled, costs have increased by 166 per cent. This means that the increase in net output or the surplus has been of a smaller order (e.g. 69 per cent in the illustration) than the increase in gross output (e.g. 110 per cent). It also means that the gross output to costs ratio is less in the new as compared to the old situation. In our example it declines from 2.36 (1937) to 1.86 (1981).

2. The share of wages in cultivation costs has sharply decreased from 46 to about 25 per cent due to the change in the cost structure whereby electricity and the chemical inputs have become a major cost component. As a proportion to value added, wage costs have decreased from 24.7 to 22.3 per cent. However, absolute payments to labour have increased in real terms from 0.21 to 0.31 tonnes of paddy or by 48 per cent. We suggest later that there has been no perceptible increase in real wages per diem in Iruvelpattu in 1981 with reference to 1937. Moreover, to the extent that the proportion of female to male labour is higher in the incremental labour use involved in the new technology, the average unit cost of labour will be reduced in view of lower wages paid to women. The increase in the wage bill of 48 per cent in real terms would therefore seem to indicate that per acre labour absorption in the new technology (when there is no mechanisation) has gone up at least by a similar proportion,

because of increased labour inputs for harvesting, application of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, water use, and more intensive agricultural practices. The extent to which this has reflected itself in more agricultural employment in the village has to be examined separately.

3. Chemical fertilisers, pesticides and electricity together account for about 60 per cent of costs. With such a high level of purchased inputs, it is not surprising that issues relating to terms of trade and government's pricing policies for grain and fertilisers have become live issues. In electricity, it is not the tariff as much as the other costs on operation, maintenance, depreciation and interest that account for the major share. We also saw that farmers are prepared to pay nearly twice these costs when they buy water.

4. Land revenue (including cesses and surcharges) has become quite an insignificant element. From about 30 per cent of costs in 1937 it has sharply decreased to 1.4 per cent.[20/] Slater found in all the villages surveyed by his team that land revenue amounted to 6 per cent of the gross produce and to 14 per cent of the net produce. In Iruvelpattu in 1937 it has amounted to more: about 13 per cent of gross output and 22 per cent of the net. At present, land revenue accounts for about less than one per cent of gross output and less than 2 per cent of the net output. This is in striking contrast to the elaborate establishment being maintained to levy and collect it, and the extent to which it looms in the rhetoric of land owners.

Land ownership

Land ownership in Iruvelpattu has continued to be dominated by one big landlord. At the present time it is BL, the heir to the landlord whom Slater encountered and described in the following words:

> The average area of each plot was just over one acre: and the 656 acres of cultivated land were shared by no less than 165 ryots, which allows a little less than 4 acres for each ryot on the average. This is according to the official survey. At the present day the ownership of land is much more concentrated. The largest of these holdings, that of 112 plots, and another of 24 plots were in 1981 held by brothers, one of whom was childless, and they both passed to the only son of the other brother. The larger property thus created has been steadily increased by the purchase of more land from small ryots who, unable to make headway against debt have sold their land and, in some cases, emigrated to Ceylon. Altogether this relatively wealthy man at the time of my visit owned about 400 acres in the village, and about 200 acres in adjoining villages. He cultivated about 200 acres himself, and let out the remainder to tenants.

We were able to obtain some further information to supplement Slater's account. In the original settlement register of 1890, Slater's landlord is shown as having an ownership holding of 145 acres. Other main landholding families in the village consisted of a group of Reddiar families owning between them 177 acres, of which one single person held 72 acres. The third group of major landowners were Brahmins accounting for 41 acres. BL's father appears to have added to his property mainly from three sources: (a) the lands of his childless brother which passed on to him (b) purchases from the Brahmin landlords who gradually emigrated from the village and (c) the major part of the lands of two other Reddiar landowners. Slater himself made the following reference to the last-mentioned source but failed to connect that BL's father was the main beneficiary of their troubles:

> "In 1885 (cir.), two brothers, well-to-do ryots in Eruvellipet, took a leading part with others in the erection of a sugar refinery. They were disappointed in their hope of obtaining a licence for the distillation of arrack, which would have been a profitable by-product; and there was another mill in a village five miles distant which competed for cane. The result was that in 1895 the Eruvellipet company was wound up, and the mill fell into ruins....the two brothers having died, left their families encumbered by debt. The dead men had held jointly a holding of 102 acres."

Most of this holding of 102 acres passed into the hands of BL's father in the process of clearing the debts incurred in setting up the sugar refinery. As we shall show later, Slater also seems to have somewhat exaggerated the size of the holding; it was closer to 350 than to 400 acres in his time. Some of it, as he pointed out, must have been acquired from small ryots who sold off their land to BL's father to meet debt payments to him or to other lenders but most of it seems to have been acquired in fairly large chunks between 1890 and 1920 in the ways in which we report.

Moving to 1937, it is curious that, in an otherwise detailed resurvey, AKV makes no explicit reference to the big landlord. In its own way, AKV's silence on this subject is significant for he was writing in 1937 at an advanced phase of the nationalist movement when the first "popular Ministry" had assumed office in the State. Apparently, even as late as 1937, the state of consciousness was such that very large landlords could pass unnoticed. However, from the patta statistics that AKV reproduced in his survey, we find that in 1920, and again in 1937, there was one patta accounting for an extent of 354.10 acres. There was thus no net addition during 1920-1940. This is plausible because BL's father died in the early 1930s and, BL being a minor at the time, the property was being managed until the early fifties by an uncle who was a caretaker.[21]

MRH got back to the trial during her visit to the village in 1961. Here references are as follows:

> "In 1961, Eruvelipet was found still to have its plutocrat - a direct descendant of this man of whom Slater wrote -- who held 202 hectares, half of which he cultivates, half of which he sublets; moreover he was further increasing his estate by purchasing land from small ryots who, unable to make headway against debt, were selling their land.... the Madras Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling on Land) Bill, 1960

> provided for a ceiling of 12 'standard' hectares for every person or family of not more than five members. Closer inquiry into the situation in Eruvellipet in 1961, however, revealed that its largest landholder possessed 123 'standard' hectares -- ten times greater than that to which he was entitled under the Ceiling on Land Bill for a family of five members. His method of evasion was to register his 'surplus' land in the names of others".

MRH's estimate of the effective, although not the legal, holding in 1961 was thus upward of 307.5 standard acres (123 standard hectares). This might not have been far less than 354.1 ordinary acres reported from 1920 onwards and would indicate that ownership remained intact up to the early 1960s.

The land ownership of the plutocrat was, understandably, the most sensitive subject in our enquiry. There were definite limits to what could be ascertained, established and disclosed within the framework of an academic investigation. Some facts could be gathered to start with. Around 1959, just prior to the Ceiling Bill of 1960, the Government acquired 37.5 acres from this holding for a State Seed Farm paying for it at market prices.[22/] An additional 34.39 acres were declared as surplus. 42.77 acres continue legally in BL's patta. Our estimate of lands under other names and under lease add up to around 200 acres. The nominal holders and lessees are servants, attached labourers, absentee friends and relatives, and one client family in the village which holds a major portion. Together with the legally owned land, effective control still extends up to about 250 acres, most of which is also under direct cultivation. However, relative to the estimate of about 350 acres prior to the ceiling legislation in 1961, there seems to have been some reduction since our estimates of land under continued control, the seed farm acquisition and the declared surplus add up to only about 330 acres. We understood that some lands were in

fact disposed off to former tenants on hire-purchase terms with amortisation payments being recovered as an add-on to the rent. In sum, neither the 30 standard acre ceiling referred to by MRH, much less its later reduction in 1972 to 15 standard acres, have made much difference to the facts on ground in Iruvelpattu.[23] The ceiling has however prevented further concentration. It has lead to some divestiture and might, in the course of decades, lead to more.[24]

We may now turn to the non-BL owned lands in the village. The only available official statistics that can throw some light on ownership are patta statistics.[25] But these suffer from major difficulties: (a) wilful or negligent under-recording of land under ownership (b) lands under the same owner may be shown under different pattas (c) land transfers through sale, gift or inheritance are not always translated into changes in the patta (d) joint pattas do not indicate the individual shares of each of the joint owners and (e) members of the same household may have different pattas and household ownership of land can not be ascertained from patta statistics. We have adjusted the 1981 statistics in order to reflect the reality in regard to BL. For the rest, the patta statistics are reproduced in Table 12.

Table 12 : Land ownership distribution estimates 1890 and 1981

Size class (acres)	No. of pattas	1890 share	No. of pattas	1981 share
0 - 0.99	30	2.2	239	11.7
1.00 - 2.49	36	7.0	78	20.5
2.50 - 4.99	17	10.6	34	17.5
5.00 - 9.99	8	8.9	11	9.1
10.00 - 19.99	7	16.5	5	2.3
20.00 - 29.99	2	8.8	-	-
40.00 - 49.99	1	8.2	-	-
70.00 - 79.99	1	12.6	-	-
100.00 - 149.99	1	25.2	-	-
200 - 249.99	-	-	1	38.9
	103	100.0	368	100.0

The changes between 1890 and 1981 are quite striking. For reasons already outlined, the concentration at the top has increased given the largest landlord's pattern of acquisition from other large landowners. His share has gone up from 25.2 to 38.9 per cent and there are no individual holdings now between his and those of 20 acres or more. At the bottom, there has been a proliferation of small holdings. In 1890, for instance, holdings of 5 acres or less were 19.8 per cent of all owned land in the village. At present they are 49.7 per cent. Due to natural processes of inheritance and sub-divisions, ownership has become increasingly fragmented outside of BL's holdings.

The patta statistics reproduced in Table 13 based on the settlement register of 1890, AKV's resurvey and current village records also underline this trend.

<u>Table 13 : Patta statistics for Iruvelpattu 1890-1981</u>

	No.	Extent	No. of pattadars	No. of sub-divisions
<u>1890</u>				
Single pattas	74	448.02	74	462
Joint pattas	29	126.71	88	159
Total pattas	103	574.73	162	621
<u>1920</u>				
Single pattas	130	NA	130	NA
Joint pattas	53	NA	NA	NA
Total pattas	183	692.98	NA	NA
<u>1936</u>				
Total pattas	198	NA	NA	NA
<u>1981</u>				
Single pattas	234	411.25	234	475
Joint pattas	134	208.67	543	305
Total pattas	368	619.92	777	780

The total number of pattas has progressively increased from 103 in 1890 to 183 in 1920, 198 in 1936 and 368 in 1981. The increase in joint pattas has been from 29 in 1890 to 53 in 1920 to 134 in 1981. The number of joint pattadars has gone up from 88 in 1890 to 543 in 1981 and the area under joint pattas from 22 per cent of owned land in 1890 to 34 per cent in 1981. Sub-divisions or operational parcels under single pattas have not increased much in these 90 years, only from 462 to 475 with the average (owned) operational single patta holding decreasing from 0.97 acres to 0.87 acres. But sub-divisions under joint pattas have nearly doubled from 159 to 305 with average (owned) operational holdings under joint pattas decreasing from 0.80 to 0.68 acres. Joint pattas have thus provided a way out when the holding size, due to progressive sub-divisions, becomes too small for further carving up.[26/] However, the addition of more joint pattas, and of more names to each joint patta, have their costs in creating impediments for land improvement, obtaining credit and so on. The present policy of the Tamilnadu Government is to get joint pattas divided up amongst the individual shareholders but this is not optimal either for it will only lead to more of more uneconomic holdings.

Both Slater and AKV referred to the fragmentation of operational holdings. Slater felt that fragmentation "was, in fact, largely a question of waste of time; and waste of time does not matter much unless it is at the critical period, the period of the critical operation, of the agricultural year". He added that "very seldom are villagers willing to make the smallest sacrifice of area or value in order to have their lands continuous instead of scattered. I can only account for this by supposing that the fragmentation in actual practice makes less difference than might be supposed. With regard to this question also, the only definite conclusion I have come to is that more information is required".[27/] AKV, on the other hand, included consolidation among the

'improvements needed' and suggested that in this matter "Government interference would be beneficial". Table 13 will show that the number of parcels per patta has decreased from 6 in 1890 to 2.1 in 1981 on the average. This is so because with increasing ownership fragmentation, ownership holdings which have become smaller are also in fewer bits. According to the 1981 statistics, beyond ownership holdings of 2.5 acres, the parcels to patta ratio increases as the size of the ownership holding goes up,from 3 (2.5 - 4.99 acres) to 8 (10.00 - 19.99 acres). To the marginal holder, fragmentation may not be a serious problem. Above him also it has been argued that fragmentation might have some advantages for the cultivator in rice producing areas in enabling him to deploy his time, labour and cattle on different parcels by turn and by providing a mixed portfolio of different types of land. However, under conditions of pumpset irrigation, fragmentation can be a definite impediment to the cultivator with 3 acres or more, who may own enough land to make a pumpset viable,but has difficulty in putting it to economic and efficient use because his holding is scattered, and this constraint discourages him from investing in one. The purchase of water may provide an alternative but a high cost one.

Land ownership is heavily concentrated among the caste Hindus. The Harijans who constitute about 30 per cent of Iruvelpattu's population altogether own less than 18 acres or less than 3 per cent of the land under ownership. The largest holding among the 40 Harijans who own some land is less than 2 acres. On an average, Harijans who own some land at all own 0.50 acres each. There are 95 landless households in the village, of whom 50 are Harijans.

Table 12 will show that between BL and the smaller owners having less than 5 acres of land, there are few rich peasants in Iruvelpattu. The biggest of them deserves note as an illustration of what can be achieved with a combination

of large family size, thrift, hardwork and good luck. PG is the eldest of five brothers in a Vanniar family which started with owning less than one acre of land 25 years ago. He and his family now own about 45 acres, two houses, a tractor, and four pumpsets. The family lives together and both male and female adults work on their lands in supervision and, sometimes, in direct cultivation activities. PG's family has been continually investing surpluses in buying up land. The ceiling having put a brake on further acquisition by BL, it has been possible for PG to be a buyer of first resort for land coming up for sale in the village. One large acquisition was, for instance, from a landowner in a neighbouring village who wanted to dispose off his holdings in Iruvelpattu. Several small holders needing ready cash and a reasonable price have turned to PG as a buyer and he has been able to utilise most such opportunities in the last 10 years. Over the years, the accumulations of PG's family have been steady, and have by now become substantial. But they have been financed entirely from internal savings starting with the first pumpset in 1959 by which time about 3 acres of land had been acquired. PG's case was a classical example in Iruvelpattu of accumulation based on a Weberian model of capitalism.

Distribution of assets

It will be no matter of surprise that BL holds the most substantial assets in the village, apart from urban properties, a rice mill, shares and other financial assets in Madras and other places. We have already referred to his ownership of 35 houses and 28 pumpsets, the latter constituting 36 per cent of pumpsets in the village. BL's other assets include 3 tractors, a truck and two cars. The only other tractor is owned by PG. In regard to pumpsets, those who own between 5 and 20 acres command 42 per cent as compared to their share in landownership of 11.4 per cent; smaller farmers with less than 5 acres own the balance of 22 per cent of pumpsets.[29]

The distribution of cattle is less skewed. Of adult cattle, BL has 68 or 13 per cent. His stock includes the two breeding bulls in the village. Other Caste Hindus own 79.2 per cent of adult cattle and the Harijans own 7.8

per cent, mostly cows. Landowners with 5 acres or more (other than BL) own 12 per cent of cattle and those with less than 5 acres, the balance of 75 per cent. Table 14 gives the distribution of pumpsets and cattle for the different groups.

Table 14 : Distribution of assets in Iruvelpattu

Size class (in acres)	Share in land ownership	Share in pumpsets	Share in Adult cattle
0 - 4.99	49.7	22.0	75.0
5.00 - 19.99	11.4	42.0	12.0
BL	38.9	36.0	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Land sales and prices

There have not been many land sales in Iruvelpattu in the recent past; in the last five years, we could locate only 6 cases. These sales were mostly within families and, if outside, generally from smaller to larger owners, such as PG, who had the purchasing power and could offer a competitive price and ready cash. Land prices varied depending on the quality, location and water table. Prices for wet land were Rs.8000-10,000 per acre for the lowest sort to Rs.15,000-Rs.20,000 per acre for the best land. Dry land went for a premium at Rs.17,000 to 20,000 per acre because of better soils, higher water table and suitability for raising cash crops.

MRH gave a comparison in real terms of land prices in 1936 and 1961, and of land prices and land revenue in both years. We have brought it up to date in Table 15.

Table 15 : Land prices and land revenue in real terms

(ton of paddy per acre)

	Land price	Land revenue
1936	3.4 - 6.7	0.08 - 0.14
1961	6.6 - 13.4	0.02
1981	6.1 - 13.6	0.02 (wet land)

Land prices were low in 1936 following the depression.[30/] Comparing 1961 and 1981, the price of land in real terms with reference to paddy prices seems to have remained constant, despite the fact that in the last two decades returns from land have increased due to improved productivity and higher intensity of cropping. The number of sales we encountered is too small for drawing any conclusion but a part of the explanation for this invariance may be the nature of the land market where sales generally take place on a quasi-distress basis from the small to the larger owners, with the buyers being in a position to purchase it for less than its true value. Table 15 also shows that the incidence of land revenue to land value has sharply decreased since 1936, just as it has in relation to cultivation costs as brought out in Table 11-B. The ratio will be particularly low for dry lands for in their case prices are higher and land revenue is much lower as compared to wet lands.

Tenancy

In 1937, a substantial amount of cultivated land in Iruvelpattu was under tenancy. According to AKV's figures out of a total cultivated extent of 692 acres, 391 acres or 56 per cent had been leased out. There were a total of 161 tenants of whom 37 owned some land of their own and 124 were landless. Kuthagai (fixed rent) was the dominant mode of tenancy accounting for 64 per cent of leased land, and varam (share-cropping), although taking second place, was not insignificant accounting for the balance of 36 per cent. Share rent under varam was 50 per cent. The kuthagai was paid in kind. In both cases, cultivation costs were borne by the tenant. AKV's estimates of kuthagai payments at 10-16 kalams per cawni on an estimated yield of 30 kalams per cawni work out to about 40 per cent. AKV noted that under varam the landlord gives seeds on loan because he has "a direct interest in seeing that the tenant cultivates the land properly". But, this 'interest' had another dimension as well: the loan was to be repaid in kind at the time of harvest with interest amounting to 100 per cent. In 1961, MRH states that the number of tenants had decreased to 100 but she gives no estimates of the extent under lease or its distribution between varam and kuthagai. Her estimate of fixed rents works out to the equivalent of 12 kalams per cawni, not very different from the figure in AKV's time. In terms of her output estimates, kuthagai works out to 40 per cent of gross output.

In our survey we found that only 49.82 acres were under tenancy amounting to about 7 per cent of cultivated land. The number of tenants was 70 of whom 48 owned some land and 22 were landless. There has accordingly been a drastic reduction in the area under lease, and particularly in the number of landless tenants since AKV's time in 1937. AKV found 19 absentee landlords with all except one in neighbouring

villages. We found about a dozen landowners who lived in Villupuram or Madras. Most of them got the small amount of lands owned by them cultivated through hired labour, either through personal supervision or with the help of agents and relatives in the village. Slater referred to the fact that BL's father had leased out about 200 acres in the village. BL continues to be the main lessor; about 70 per cent of leased lands belong to him. His tenants are mostly "grace and favour" recipients of small amounts of land, in the range of 0.5 to 0.6 acres. Most of them also work for him as padials or agricultural labourers.[31/]

Varam as a mode of tenancy has almost been phased out and accounts at present for less than 10 per cent of all leased land. The general rate of kuthagai continues to be 12 kalams per cawni (400 kg per acre) but BL charges 14 kalams (450 kg per acre) on his rented land.[32/] Thus there has been no change in the general rates of kuthagai in the last four decades and we were explicitly told that this has been so. By the same token, it is doubtful if there has been any increase in per acre yields on leased lands. If kuthagai can be taken as amounting to 40 per cent of gross output, as shown in the estimates of AKV and MRH, yields on lands under tenancy are likely to be of the order of a tonne of paddy per acre or still at the pre-new technology levels. There are no pumpset irrigated lands under tenancy; and a tenant will obviously not be in a position to put up a pumpset in leased land. Adopting the new technology will, in his case, involve buying water and, as we saw earlier, this will entail a payment of one-third of the gross output for irrigation. On a new technology output of about 2.3 tonnes per acre about 780 kg of paddy will have to be paid for water in addition to 400 kg as kuthagai. Seeds, manure, fertilisers and pesticides are likely to amount to 600 kg. For his own labour, as well as hired labour with which he will have to supplement it, the compensation will be only

about 500 kg to a tenant farmer. MRH found that after meeting rent and costs, the tenant was "hardly better off" than an agricultural labourer; the effect of the new technology would probably be to make him rather worse off. Thus, apart from ceiling legislation and the fear of tenancy legislation, promoting the resumption of tenancies by landowners, one can see that the new technology is an inducement for direct cultivation and tenancy a handicap towards its adoption.

Labour

The occupational pattern in Iruvelpattu as brought out in our survey is given in Table 16. We have classified Caste Hindu and Harijan households under three different occupational groups viz., cultivators (landowners and tenants), agricultural labourers (including padials) and non-agricultural labour according to the main source of income for the household.

Table 16 : Occupational pattern of households 1981

Occupation	Caste Hindus	Harijans	Total
1. Cultivators (landowners and tenants)	130	6	136
2. Agricultural labourers, including padials	35	74	109
3. Non-agricultural labour	68	10	78
	233	90	323

To start with, a clear demarcation can be seen in the occupational profile of caste Hindu households as compared with Harijan households. 85 per cent of caste Hindu households are either cultivating families, or engaged in non-agricultural occupations, while among the Harijans 82 per cent of households depend on agricultural labour for their main source of income.

It is difficult to trace changes in the occupational pattern over time because the available data in the previous surveys and in the Censuses of 1951, 1961 and 1971 are not complete or comparable. According to AKV's figures there were 129 owner cultivators, 161 tenants and 210 agricultural labourers in 1937. The 1951 Census does not give the number of workers in each category but only the total including dependants. MRH makes a passing reference to there being only 50 owner cultivators in 1961. The 1961 Census gives a total number of 267 cultivators (235 male and 32 female) and 366 agricultural labourers (135 and 231 female). These might well be over estimates arising from a loose definition of 'worker' : the total number of workers reported in the 1961 Census is 676 in a population of 1250 yielding an incredibly high Crude Worker Ratio of 54 per cent. As a result of a more restrictive definition of "worker" in 1971, the total number of workers is much less in the 1971 Census viz., 412 or 32 per cent of the population. The number of cultivators is only 95 (all male). The number of agricultural workers is 264 (262 male and 2 female). These figures could well be underestimates, absurdly so when it comes to female agricultural workers. The 1981 Census gives a figure of 147 for cultivators (138 male and 9 female) and 256 for agricultural labourers (173 male and 83 female) as 'main workers'. The number of marginal workers is 73 (15 male and 58 female), most of whom could be agricultural labourers.[33] Two problems associated with census figures are (a) an undercount of female workers

and (b) possible miscounting inter-se between cultivators and agricultural labour. We may try to get round both these by looking at the total for male cultivators and agricultural labourers. The figures are 370 in 1961, 357 in 1971 and 326 in 1981. They suggest a decline rather than an increase in the agricultural work force. At the same time, due to the proliferation of marginal holdings and the decrease in tenancy, it is likely that the supply of labour seeking, and available for, wage employment in agriculture would have increased. We found that many petty peasants (small and marginal cultivators and tenants), their women and quite a few in non-agricultural occupations, apart from children engaged as cattle-herds were in the casual labour market in addition to those who were landless and depended solely on agricultural labour for their income.

Emigration and non-agricultural employment are two outlets which have eased the demand for agricultural employment in the village. Non-agricultural employment is an important component in Iruvelpattu accounting for about 42 per cent of the households who depend on wage incomes for their main source of livelihood. The size of it is due to a combination of reasons, some peculiar to this village and others of more general interest. This will be apparent from Table 17 which gives the composition of non-agricultural labour households in different occupational categories.

Table 17 : Composition of non-agricultural labour households

1. Salaried employees: Teachers, postal, PHC Clerks, Gangmen, Village servants	25
2. Electricians, motor rewinders, service-men, drivers	14
3. Shop keepers	12
4. Artisans	12
5. Others	15

To comment first on the factors peculiar to Iruvelpattu, there are quite a lot of salaried employees in this village due to its having, besides the primary school, a government Seed Farm, a Primary Health Centre, a Veterinary sub-centre, a fair price shop and a post office.[34] Some of the employees like the railway gangmen live in the village but work outside. Secondly, BL has provided a source of non-agricultural employment because of his own staff of drivers, farm supervisors and accountants. Coming to more general features, one can see that the introduction of pumpsets has led to employment for electricians, motor rewinders and servicemen, a feature noticed in other villages as well.[35] Among traditional artisans, Slater and AKV noted the existence of carpenters, blacksmiths, potters and goldsmiths but unfortunately did not give their number. Even by 1937, AKV found that the "goldsmith lives by the land and his business is very dull". We did not find him at all but the other categories were there. In addition, there were four tailors bearing evidence to "modernization". Other evidence of some increased growth and prosperity comes from the number of shops, including cycle shops and the milk vendors. Non-agricultural incomes varied within a wide range. Traditional artisans like the carpenter, mason and potters, earn about Rs.2500 to Rs.3000 per annum. Others were in the range of Rs.3600 to Rs.6000 per annum. Harijans have participated in the growth of non-agricultural employment only to a limited extent. Out of 78 households in the category, they account for only 10 and that too in poorer occupations such as duck keepers, washermen and toddy tappers.

Agricultural labour households consist of padials and others. Slater described the padial as "a sort of serf, who has fallen into hereditary dependence on a landowner by debt" and he found 40 padials being employed by the big landlord in the village. AKV noted that there were a total number of 85 padials in the village in 1936. We found a total of 36 of whom 22 were with BL. They were mainly employed for

the watch and ward and operation of pumpsets and regular activities such as cutting grass, chasing away cattle, cleaning the cattle sheds, collecting and storing cow dung etc. They were generally older men, about two-thirds of them being 40 years of age or above, who preferred lighter manual work and were prepared to take lesser wages. Slater found that padials were paid from 22 to 30 Madras measures of paddy per month. AKV noted that monthly payments to padials were in the range of 11 to 22 measures supplemented by a midday meal and payments of 18 to 36 measures of paddy and 9 to 18 measures of ragi at the time of harvest. We found that padials were being paid 30 measures of paddy and 7½ measures of ragi per month, besides an annual payment of 2 bags of paddy. Costed at current prices, these will work out to about Rs.80 per month. Padials generally came from the same family, generation to generation, but we could not get any evidence of debt bondage, attempted desertion or forcible retention.[36/] In addition to the regular padials, BL employed about 30 agricultural workers on a more or less permanent basis throughout the year to attend to various miscellaneous items of farm work, watch and ward, cattle minding etc. They were paid at daily rates.

Wages

Based on AKV's survey, a comparison of real agricultural wages in Iruvelpattu in 1937 and in 1981 can be attempted in respect of transplanting, weeding and harvest. Table 18 gives the position in terms of paddy units of a Madras Measure (MM equivalent to 1.19Kg). Wherever daily wages are supplemented by a meal, ¼ of a measure of paddy has been added as it is the usual scale of the meal supplement. In converting cash wages to paddy units, we have used prevalent market prices at the time of harvest viz., one anna per MM in 1937 and Rs.1.75 per MM in 1981 (corresponding to Rs.110 per bag).

Table 18 : Real wage levels in 1937 and 1981

(in Madras Measures)

	1937		1981	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Transplanting	3.25	2.75		1.71
Weeding		1.50		1.43
Harvest	3.25	3.25	3.0 (7 hours)	3.0 (7 hours)
			4.0 (9 hours)	4.0 (9 hours)

AKV does not give any information on the hours of work per day in 1937 except for the remark that padials used to start the day at 5 a.m. At present, the number of working hours per day is generally 7 hours (8 am to 3 pm) for transplanting and 5 hours (9 am to 2 pm) for weeding. For harvest, it could be from 8 am to 3 pm or until 6 p.m., with higher wages being paid and an hour's rest allowed in the latter case. In comparing wages in 1937 and in 1981 we do not have data to adjust for hours of work. Secondly, paddy prices were particularly low in 1931-41. Official prices for 1921-31 were 14 ps. per MM and in 1931-41 they had fallen by 43 per cent to 8 ps per MM.[37/] Wages were also depressed but perhaps not to an equivalent degree in comparison with the previous decade. AKV mentions, for instance, that piece work wages for digging trenches in 1937 were Rs.10 to Rs.12 per cawni while the same work would have cost Rs.18 about 10 years ago. In a long term trend of real wages, 1937 might represent somewhat of a deviation on the higher side. At the same time, the paddy prices we have used for 1981 is rather at the lower range of paddy prices in recent years; in the severe drought year of 1975, for instance, retail prices in Tamilnadu went up as high as Rs.6 per MM of rice

equivalent to Rs.4 per MM of paddy.[38] Subject to these uncertainties, the broad conclusion suggested in Table 18 is that between 1937 and 1981, harvest wages might have gone up in real terms but real wages for transplanting and weeding have either stagnated or declined.

The daily wage rate in Iruvelpattu for general "cooly" work like bunding, levelling, fertiliser and pesticide application, carrying manure etc was Rs.3 for males and Rs.2.5 for females in the 1980 season. At that time, corresponding wages in adjacent villages were Rs.4 for males and Rs.2.5 for females. In the 1981 season, male wages were increased to Rs.4 when in adjacent villages the wage went up from Rs.4 to Rs.5. The wages prevailing for different types of work and the hours of work in 1981 are given in Table 19.

Table 19 : Wage rates in 1981

Operation	Males	Females	Hours of work
1. Ploughing	Rs.6 with bullocks Rs.4 without		6 am to 1 pm "
2. Plucking seedlings	Rs.4 and one meal		6 am to 6 pm with one hour rest
3. Transplanting		Rs.2.5 (BL) Rs.3 (others)	8 am to 3 pm
4. Weeding		Rs.2 (BL) Rs.2.5 (others)	9 am to 2 pm
5. Harvest	(i) 3 MM (ii) 4 MM	(i) 3 MM (ii) 4 MM	(i) 8 am to 3 pm (ii) 8 am to 6 pm with one hour rest
6. Threshing	4 MM	4 MM	8 am to 3 pm
7. Other farm work	Rs.4	Rs.2.0 BL Rs.2.5 (others)	6 am to 6 pm with one hour rest for meals 8 am to 3 pm for females

The reason for wages in Iruvelpattu to be lower than in the adjacent villages is that BL, as a dominant employer in the labour market, is able to beat wages down.[39/] A good proportion of agricultural labourers look to him for daily hiring; he offers for some a longer duration of employment as we noted earlier; and we have also referred to his tenant-cum-workers. His labourers are managed through 6 Araichis (literally "researchers") or supervisors who maintain not only a tight control in mobilising and supervising labour but also in gathering intelligence on incipient wage demands and in getting them nipped in the bud. During the last harvest (January 1982), for instance, there was some talk of a strike in the colony. Getting to know about it, BL imported labour from outside the village and got his harvest done in record time, thus pre-empting the move. Some threat was however held out against other landowners. The current position, at the time of writing, is that landowners other than BL have been forced to increase wages to Rs.5 for males and Rs.2.5 for females while BL continues to maintain his wages at Rs.4 and Rs.2 respectively. In adjacent villages, female wages have gone up to Rs.3 and male wages are at Rs.5. In 1937 as well AKV specifically noted that "the wage rates here are very low". Then, as now, the reason for this might have been the "plutocrat" of Iruvelpattu.

We can conclude the discussion of wages by quoting an interesting observation made by MRH:

> "De Farcy made the bold generalization that 3 Kg of cereals is the usual reward for a day's work in a subsistence economy, whether it be in India now, Russia at the beginning of the century, or France in the eighteenth century. Sufficient evidence can be found to support his proposition in present-day primitive peasant economies of Africa and Asia. Expressed as paddy, the wage paid to male agricultural labourers in Eruvellipet in 1961 was 4 Kg per day, and to women 2 Kg".

It suffices to point out that Rs.5 for men and Rs.2.5 for women in 1982 are respectively equivalent to 3.4 Kg and to 1.7 Kg.

Duration of employment

We could get only broad orders of magnitude in regard to the duration of employment for agricultural labour. Reasonably full employment was reported from mid-September (Purattasi) to mid-November (Karthigai) and again between mid-December (Margazhi) and mid-March (Masi) and partial employment for half the month each in August-September (Avani) and in November-December (Karthigai). In mid-March (Panguni) to mid-June (Vaikasi), casual employment was available for 30 to 50 workers in cane cutting in Iruvelpattu and in surrounding villages; some went as far as Pondicherry and Ulundurpet during the cane cutting season. Padials were employed throughout the year. Pumpset watchmen and operators were engaged for 8 to 9 months. Altogether duration of employment was reported in the range of 6 to 7 months for males and 5 to 6 months for females. Average employment for males and females taken together, assuming equal numbers, can be placed at 180 days and suggest a definite improvement with reference to 131 days estimated in 1961 by MRH as an average for men and women. It is however not clear how she arrived at such a precise estimate in the course of a very brief survey.

Given increased per acre labour absorption in the new technology, and no great increase in the agricultural labour force, some increase in the average duration of employment is plausible. Cane cutting in nearby villages has provided an additional source of employment; so have the pumpsets for the operation of which labour has to be employed. However, off setting factors should also be taken into account. About 40 per cent of the acreage in the village is being ploughed with tractors which have displaced labour. The new technology is also being adopted only over about 30 per cent of the extent. With a proliferation of marginal holdings, many "cultivators" also compete in the labour market. Impressionistically, most labour households reported more work being

available now than a decade or two ago. Many of the women pointed out that they had a substantial amount of work from handpounding of paddy about 20 years ago and this source of employment had now disappeared.

Poverty

An attempt can be made to construct a 'poverty line' for Iruvelpattu on a simplified basis. The standard farm-site meal for an adult worker is equivalent to ¾ MM of paddy or about 200 grams of rice. In terms of cereals an adult consumption unit (c.u.) can be taken as 400 grams per day for two meals.[40] A family of 4.5 persons, can be taken to consist of 4 c.u.s. on the basis of one c.u. per each of the two adults and 0.8 c.u. for each of 2.5 children. Per day cereal requirements will then be 1.6 Kg of rice equivalent at current public distribution prices to Rs.3.6. On the basis of other studies, we assume that the poorest families spend 80 per cent of their total consumption expenditure on food and of that, 60 per cent on cereals.[41] Corresponding to Rs.3.6 on cereals, total minimum consumption per day per family will work out to Rs.7.5. The annual figure will be Rs.2738. In terms of per capita per month the line will be Rs.51.

This estimate of the poverty line at Rs.51 is well below the official estimate of Rs.76 in 1979-80 prices for rural India.[42] Even so, all the agricultural labour households in Iruvelpattu will be below the poverty line. Assuming at best 180 days of average employment (at Rs.5 per day) for men and women (at Rs.2.5 per day), the annual earnings of an agricultural labour household with two adult workers will come to Rs.1350. This figure will leave out the value of non-purchased items (e.g. fuel) and the earnings of non-adults. A detailed survey of 11 landless labour households gave an average annual household income of Rs.1645.

Even this higher estimate is well below the poverty line of Rs.2738 per family per annum. The current legal minimum wage in 1981 for general agricultural operations was Rs.6.2 for both men and women. If this were enforced on 360 days of family employment, agricultural labour households could be brought to about 80 per cent of our minimal estimate of the poverty line. In paddy equivalent, an income of Rs.2738 per annum will entail a net output of 1.9 tonnes or 25 bags of paddy. Cultivators operating less than 2 acres of land without access to pumpsets are not likely to achieve this output even with two crops and can be taken as falling below, the line. Altogether, some 200 agricultural labour and marginal cultivator households or 62 per cent of the total number of 323 households in Iruvelpattu can be considered to be 'absolutely poor'. They will include all the Harijan households and about 47 per cent of caste Hindu households, divided about equally between agricultural labourers and marginal cultivators. The high proportion of poverty in Iruvelpattu, despite the 'low' poverty line suggested, is the effect of an extreme concentration of land ownership in this village and of particularly low wages.

Some retail prices

We have compared real wages in 1937 and in 1981 using the price of paddy as the deflator. It is of interest that in the same period other items of common consumption in the food group such as tamarind and chillies have registered price increases at levels higher than that recorded by rice. This can be seen from Table 20 which compares retail prices for tamarind, chillies, jaggery, gingelly and salt in 1937 and in 1981, using data in AKV's survey.

Table 20 : Retail prices in Iruvelpattu

Item	Unit	1937	1981	1981/1937
Rice	Kg	8p	Rs.2.25	28
Tamarind	"	5.5p	Rs.6.00	109
Green Chillies	"	14p	Rs.4.00	29
Dried Chillies	"	50p	Rs.16.00	32
Jaggery	"	44p	Rs.2.5	6
Gingelly	"	56p	Rs.6.5	12
Salt	measure	10p	80p	8

There is a Government fair price shop in Iruvelpattu. Cards have been issued entitling the holders to buy 12 Kg. of rice per month and specified quantities of sugar and kerosene. We found that a good many of these cards were being used by BL and other big landowners to meet their requirements of sugar. There was fairer distribution of rice which was sold at Rs.2.25 per Kg. in the shop but rice was only sporadically available in the fair price shop. Controlled cloth, we were told, was sold only to the caste Hindus. The shop assistant lived outside the village and, on many days, the shop remained shut. There were also complaints of leakage of "fair price" merchandise from this shop to private shops in the village and to customers outside Iruvelpattu.

Fuel and manure

Slater observed that "he who grows casuarina does a service to the whole community, because the more firewood is available, the fewer varaties (cow-dung cakes) are burnt". He would have been happy to know that, due to the high cost

of fertilisers, cow-dung and leaf manure are now being carefully conserved. There is no use of cowdung as a cooking fuel, although it is burnt for baking pots.[43/] Cowdung and other organic manure is collected and dumped in separate lots by each household in common places like the road side and the thopes. We were told that there was no theft but that sometimes daughters-in-law who collected manure dumped them in their parents' lots!

There was hardly any use of "commercial" fuel such as casuarina, charcoal or kerosene for cooking. The Harijans and poorer caste Hindus collected twigs, thorn bushes, casuarina tops, and sugar cane leaves for use as fuel. BL, who has most of the casuarina and the sugarcane in the village, obliged them by throwing out casuarina tops and sometimes even acquiesced in their being stolen from his fields. Better-off landowners could use twigs and branches from their owned trees and gingelly and cumbu stalks from their fields. BL himself had a bio-gas plant commissioned in 1980 at a cost of Rs.6000 and serviced by 25 buffaloes. His needs for fuel were high since meals were cooked in his house for farm labour.

Indebtedness and savings

Slater dealt with indebtedness in general terms by pointing out "Debt is an almost universal condition. Landowners and cultivators, large and small, are in debt to one another and to Chettis (a merchant caste) in Villupuram." On rates of interest, he surmised that they "may be 24 or 36 per cent, i.e., 2 or 3 per cent per month". AKV estimated the total indebtedness of the village at a precise figure of Rs.1,71,954. The rates he reported were within quite a range: "Borrowers pay 12 per cent interest on mortgage loans, 18 per cent on loans by pronote, and 37½ per cent on loans obtained by pledging jewels within the village itself, 18¾ per cent on loans obtained by pledging jewels in the Marwari

shop either at Villupuram or Panruti and 7½ per cent obtained by pledging jewels in the Kannika Parameshwari Bank at Villupuram." The Villupuram bank however lent only on gold jewels and the Marwari charged a month's additional interest if payments were delayed even by a day. AKV found that generally the ryots preferred to pledge jewels with their neighbours although it involved the higher interest rate of 37½ per cent.

We could not do a systematic survey of indebtedness. All that was possible was to obtain some idea of interest rates by contacting 14 persons in the village who were reported to be engaged in money lending. They consisted of landowners owning 5 to 10 acres, shopkeepers, tradesmen, milk vendors and a few salary earners. Between them, Rs.70,000 was reported to have been lent out to people in the village. Of the 14, 5 lent only to borrowers in the caste Hindu village, 5 (mostly Harijans themselves) only to people in the colony, and 4 to both caste Hindus and Harijans. Interest was reckoned on two different bases. If paid in kind, it was ½ a bag of paddy per annum (Rs.55 at current prices) on a loan of Rs.100. 6 of the lenders lent only for paddy interest. The cash rate of interest was 10 ps per month for one rupee or 120 per cent per annum.[44] Generally, loans were made only on the pledge of vessels or jewels but a pronote was held sufficient if the borrower had some land and opted for interest payment in kind. The rates we encountered were thus much higher than those noticed earlier. Harijans, without land or jewels, were generally forced to borrow at the cash rate either within the village or from moneylenders in neighbouring villages; in other words, the poorer people, with larger needs for borrowing, had to pay more than double the interest rate charged to borrowers with some land or pawnable articles. Landowners, including BL, extended small loans for marriages, funerals and other such contingencies but discouraged consumption loans.

The Post Office Savings Bank reported 60 recurring deposit accounts, all held by caste Hindus. There were 102 savings bank accounts in the range of Rs.250 to Rs.500, including 5 from the colony. These figures show a considerable improvement compared with AKV's finding that there were only 3 savings accounts in the Post Office in 1936. We also found that some of the smaller cultivators had deposited their moneys with BL for safe-keeping on a "no interest" basis.

Iruvelpattu does not have a cooperative credit society of its own and is one of 5 villages served by the society in the adjacent village of Mamandur. The President of the society is a large Reddiar landowner and a close friend of BL. In the current year, only 34 cultivators or about a tenth of the total number have taken crop production loans. 15 were refused because they had defaulted on earlier loans.

Cattle

Table 21 sets out the cattle count in 1916 (Slater), 1937 (AKV) and in 1981. Even in 1916, Slater found that 250 working animals or 5½ acres per plough team were insufficient in relation to the general rule that "four acres of wet land to a pair of bullocks is the right proportion". Table 21 will show that between 1916 and 1936, there was an increase in the number of draught animals but there has been a drastic reduction in 1981. The reason is that with 3 tractors in the village (2 with BL and one with PG), about 280 acres or about 40 per cent of cultivated area is being ploughed by tractors. In relation to the balance, the average area ploughed by a bullock or buffalo team is about 6 acres. In actual fact, it may be less because there is also some custom hiring of tractors.[45]

Table 21 : Cattle and livestock population

	1916	1937	1981
1. Draught animals	250	317	136
2. Milch cattle	150	251	343
3. Young cattle	180	131	100
4. Sheep and goats	NA	446	111
5. Pigs	NA	6	20
6. Poultry	NA	---	725
7. Ducks	NA	---	835

There has been a steady increase in milch cattle over the period of about 35 per cent in a decade. The number of young cattle has come down over the years. The stock of sheep and goats has sharply decreased between 1937 and 1981. The maintenance of goats in the colony has been specifically discouraged by BL on account of the damage they cause to trees. Lack of pasturage is another factor. The village has no common pasture except in the dry season when cattle can graze on parts of the tank and in fallow lands. There are 725 poultry and 835 ducks at the present time. There are not many pigs in the village. Some of the Harijans tried to rear pigs but were prevented from doing so by BL because the pigs used to damage the sugar cane crop. AKV reported prices of Rs.10 to 25 for plough cattle and Rs.50 to 100 for cart bullocks. Current prices are Rs.1500 to Rs.2000 for plough cattle and Rs.3000 to Rs.3500 for cart bullocks. In real terms, cattle prices have increased far beyond land prices or wages.

BL has his own siring bulls. There is a veterinary sub centre in the village, established due to his efforts, which provides artificial insemination for cows. On an

average, about 5 to 10 inseminations are given per month. In 1978-1981, out of 60 cases of insemination only 16 or 27 per cent had reported successful calving. BL is able to provide cattle feed to his stock but others make do with hay, bran or open grazing. Periodically, mortality takes a heavy toll of cattle and poultry. About 100 cattle were reported to have died in 1978 from an epidemic of foot and mouth disease. Recently, a whole truck load of ducks which were being transported for sale in Andhra died from a virus.

25 persons, all caste Hindus, sell milk to vendors in the village who collect and sell it at Villupuram. Among them, BL was the main supplier. He was able to obtain Rs.2 per litre for cow's milk while the rate for others was only rupee one. The higher price that BL could command was reported to be due to the quality and regularity of supply. The general price for buffalo's milk was Rs.1.25 per litre. In the past, some attempts had been made by the Harijans to obtain commercial bank loans for milch cattle but these were thwarted by BL. Very recently, however, they have been able to persuade one of the nationalised banks to lend for milch cattle. They have had 40 milch cows financed and have set up a milk collection centre in the colony.

IV The Village Polity

Slater found "a spirit of local solidarity" in Iruvelpattu during his visit and traced it to the "common fund of the village, the very existence of which is a testimony to the existence of this village solidarity". Resources to the common fund came about in two ways. Firstly, from the sale of the right to fish in the village tank and of the right to cut reeds, which are valued for thatching. Both these rights were exclusively sold to one individual in each case.

The greater part of the resources came in another way viz., from the auction of the right to gather fruits from the tamarind trees on the highway. Slater described the system prevailing in his time as follows: "The Eruvellipet villagers do not compete with one another at these auctions. They send one representative who buys the fruit on two miles of road which lie mainly, but not entirely, within the village boundaries. They then have a subsequent auction among themselves, and prices about ten times as high are ordinarily realized. The profit amounts to about 200 rupees per annum".

AKV sounded less enthusiastic about the common fund. The proceeds from the tree auctions went to the Local Fund, i.e., to Government. Some amount, Rs.35 to 50, was available from the sale of the right to fish in the spring channel. As far as the tank was concerned, fishery auction proceeds were retained by about a dozen persons who paid a fishery rent.

We found the situation quite interesting. The tank was a Government source of irrigation on the registers of the Public Works Department but customary rights to fish in it had been recognised in favour of 17 traditional shareholders. These shares had begun to be bought and sold over time. BL had been acquiring them gradually and at present 12 out of 17 shares were in his hands. An absentee landlord from a neighbouring village had a 1¼ share, PG had a ¾ share, the Kambakkaran had one, 4 families in the colony shared one, and the other was jointly held by 3 Caste Hindu families. BL and the absentee landlord auctioned the fish accruing to their shares while the other shareholders enjoyed it in kind. BL was able to realise about Rs.3500 annually from the auction of the rights attached to his shares in the last 3 years. When one of the shares was sold recently the price fetched was Rs.2500, nearly double of what prevailed in 1974.

BL also enjoys exclusive rights to the reeds (vizhal) and the silt in the tank, although it is not clear when and by what means he came to acquire them. He allows the villagers to take whatever reeds they need for thatching their houses and also allows them to use the silt. A written permission from him is needed in both cases. The actual cost of cutting the reeds and of silt removal will have to be paid by the user. The rest of the reeds grown in the tank are auctioned by BL. The annual income from this source has been about Rs.10,000 in the last two years.

The two-step system of tree auctions described by Slater is no longer prevalent in Iruvelpattu although it is being followed in the adjacent villages of Arasur and Perangaiyur. The Panchayat Union individually auctions about 150 trees on the highway within the village limits. The bidders, about 40 to 50, were all Caste Hindus in the village. In 1981, the average bid amount was around Rs.50. The value of usufructs varied and was in the range of Rs.100 to Rs.200 per tree. If the old system had survived, it can thus be estimated that the village community could have realised a sum of Rs.15,000 from this source. About an equal amount would have been available from the fish and the reeds, if they had remained in the ownership of the community.

If BL had put himself in possession of some of the resources that ought to have accrued to a common fund, it was also the case that he has used at least a part of these resources for common purposes. He had donated about Rs.80,000 for the restoration of the Vinayakar temple. Annually, he gives Rs.4000 for the Ponniamman temple festivals. Last year, he had undertaken the desilting of the tank and its supply channels at a cost of about Rs.4500. Ordinary repairs and maintenance to the water supply tank and pump are looked after by him. In other words, BL has, more or less, become a one-man version of the common fund that Slater had taken to be a striking evidence of village solidarity, in the process replacing "solidarity" with hegemony.

In fact, there is no aspect of the village polity over which this hegemony does not extend. AKV noted that there was no panchayat in the village in 1937. Between 1957 and 1977, there was a functioning panchayat in Iruvelpattu. One man was President throughout this period and he was, and continues to be, one of BL's Araichis or farm supervisors. All the members of the Panchayat, including 2 Harijans, were BL's nominees and all were elected, and re-elected from time to time, unopposed. BL himself had been the Village Munsif for 17 years (1950-1967) until he had to resign this position in order to become a legislator. The successor was a close relative. The karnam was an old client and one or two of the village servants were also on BL's own staff. We have already mentioned his influence over the cooperative society through its friendly President and kinsman. Being the owner of a number of houses in the village, most of the salaried employees are his tenants and subject to his influence. Visiting officials who stay at the rest house in the next village of Arasur depend on BL for food and hospitality. BL's power and influence have had both philanthropic and misanthropic manifestations. He was able to get the PHC and the veterinary sub-centre established in the village; get a new building constructed for the primary school; and secure a great expansion of drinking water supply facilities for the Caste Hindu village. He has settled many disputes within the village and we found people seeking his advice on even their domestic problems. Whenever there is a marriage or a funeral in the caste Hindu village, BL sends a customary gift of half a bag of paddy. He has tried to promote temperance: even now, there is no arrack shop or illicit distillation in Iruvelpattu. At the same time, as we saw, BL has actively come in the way of house-sites to Harijans, has prevented the nationalised banks from lending for milch cows in the colony, and none of the good works of the Panchayat have extended to the colony. BL has maintained his control over house-sites, fuel and thatching material, although he has used his power with restraint so far.

In politics, BL has been a consistent supporter of the Congress party. For several years only posters and election propaganda of this party was allowed in the village. Even the wearing of DMK dhoties with its red and black border was prohibited. Both the caste village and the colony take his advice before voting. There is however much sympathy, particularly among the poorer caste Hindus and the Harijans, for the DMK and the AIADMK. Recently, one of the Vanniars had hoisted the AIADMK flag on his hut and this was referred to as an act of great temerity. In the 1980 elections to the State Assembly, BL had to support the DMK candidate because of the Congress-DMK alliance and this seems to have resulted in the AIADMK gaining many votes from the poor in the village. As one of them told us: "Once inside the booth, we vote according to our conscience but the conscience is silent when we come outside".

There does not seem to have been any major conflicts or clashes between the caste Hindus and the Harijans in Iruvelpattu. But social discrimination against Harijans is quite explicit. They can not wear chappals while walking in the main street of the caste village. They are not given water in a cup. They can not enter the tea-shop if a caste Hindu customer is present. Even otherwise, they have to sit on the floor and can not at the table.

Very recently, in early 1982, there have been some stirrings in the colony. One of the Harijan boys an unemployed SSLC who had been spending some time in Cuddalore, returned to the village and organised an Ambedkar Sangam encouraged by his two brothers who were also SSLCs. He was able to mobilise a group from the colony to undertake a padayatra all the way to Cuddalore to present a set of demands to the Collector. The demands reflect simple felt needs of the Harijans in Iruvelpattu and some as old as Slater viz., (i) adequate drinking water supply (ii) repair to street lights, out of 3 of which only one was functioning (iii) repairs to the road leading to the colony (iv) a primary school

in the colony (v) a creche (Balwadi) since most women went for field labour (vi) repairs to the temple (vii) house sites and (viii) adult education. In its earlier phase, BL tried his best to break up the Ambedkar Sangham and to disrupt its activities but seems to have acquiesced in these developments at a subsequent stage. He has now offered to give some money for repairing the temple, if the Sangham would agree to lie low on its other demands and, in any event, not enlarge them. It remains to be seen whether this attempt to administer a dose of 'opium to the people' will work.

V Conclusions

We can be brief in summarising the main impressions from revisiting Iruvelpattu prefacing it with Slater's own caveat: "To draw conclusions with regard to the broad economic conditions of life in India from a single village would be foolish; but even a single village may suggest far-reaching hypotheses, which it is worth-while to state with a veiw to subsequent correction or verification."

Speaking of the caste village and the 'cheri', Slater wrote nearly 70 years ago that "even in this small, almost self-contained, Dravidian community we find two civilisations, both apparently of vast antiquity, existing side by side and though each for innumerable generations has acted upon the other, they still remain distinct". In other words, in Iruvelpattu as well East (colony) was East and West (caste village) was West. The dualism that he noticed between the two has persisted to a remarkable degree. The combined effects of economic inequality, social discrimination and physical segregation on the Harijans are vividly visible. Table 22 is a summary.

Table 22 : Iruvelpattu, East and West

(percentages, unless otherwise indicated)

		Harijans	Caste Hindus
Population proportion		30	70
Schooling proportion	Male :	13.7	54.7
	Female :	6.7	26.7
	Total :	10.2	42.1
Post middle level schooling		7.1	17.3
Drop outs at primary level		77	52
Proportion of terraced and tiled houses		Nil	15.6
Proportion of electrified houses		Nil	27.6
Water connections (public and private) Nos.		Nil	49
Share in land ownership		3	97
Pumpset ownership Nos.		Nil	78
Share in cattle ownership		7.8	92.2
Bank deposits Nos.		Nil	60
Savings accounts Nos.		5	97
Proportion of agricultural labour households		82.2	15.2
Poverty		100.0	47

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The "Plutocrat" of Iruvelpattu whom Slater encountered, and whom MRH rediscovered in 1961, has survived successive stages of land reform with little damage. All that can be said is that ceiling legislation has resulted in the divestiture of about 10 per cent of his holdings; it has put a

brake on further acquisition; and, in future, might lead to a reduction in ownership, if benamidars were to assert themselves in the course of years. The plutocrat's economic power has given him effective control over the village and lower level bureaucracy, the village institutions and over the village commons. He is in a position to promote or prevent anything happening in or to the village. His support has been forthcoming for primary education, health care, veterinary services, and temple renovation and maintenance in the caste village. But, he has stood in the way of anything that would make the Harijans more self-reliant e.g., house-sites and milch cattle; nor, has he shown interest in securing simple welfare needs for them e.g., drinking water and street lighting. He has taken the fullest advantage of the 'new technology'. As a dominant employer in the labour market, he has been able to keep wages down. BL's position in the village is not however free of tension and threat. The kind of control that was exercised in Slater's time by Senior BL is no longer possible and tyranny has come to be considerably tempered with tact. Resentment is openly expressed in the colony, and also in the caste village. Wage claims are becoming more insistent and the Harijans are beginning to stir on many fronts. The non-Congress politics of Tamil Nadu has severed BL's state-level ties and has eroded his political standing. Developments ten to twenty years from now vis-a-vis BL will be interesting to watch.

Pumpsets, by introducing a new mode of irrigation, have enabled the spread of the new technology of high yielding seeds and chemical inputs. The fixed and operating costs of pumpsets, and the cost of purchased inputs in the new technology are such that its spread has been limited to the larger and more affluent landholders. The productivity on small and petty farms does not seem to have increased much beyond levels noticed nearly four decades ago by AKV. The scope for further extending the new technology will have to

face constraints that are institutional (credit), structural (fragmentation of ownership and operational holdings) and ecological (ground water depletion). The pumpset-based new technology also entails large social costs in terms of the heavy subsidy on electricity tariff and the progressive drawing down of the water table. On the other hand, only a negligible proportion of additional incomes accruing from its adoption is being recovered through land taxes.

The new technology has helped to create more employment in the village, as well as outside because of the extension of sugarcane cultivation. Additional employment has been created in non-agricultural occupations to which pumpsets, the growth in public services, and a general increase in trade and service activities have contributed. However, real wages seem to show a stubborn tendency to continue at about the same levels over decades. Even with more days of employment, the wage levels of agricultural households remain such that their real earnings are below minimal subsistence norms. Legal minimum wages, if enforced, could be a significant step towards poverty reduction. Marginal cultivators who are not in a position to adopt the new technology are an equally sizable component of the poor. Given also the extreme concentration of land ownership in Iruvelpattu, the poverty proportion may be over 60 per cent and it will include all the Harijan households.

Many more public services have been extended to the village than in the past. They have created a useful avenue for employment. However, for various reasons, the access of Harijans and other poor to education, health, water supply, electricity, veterinary services and the distribution of essential commodities is limited. The provision of these basic minimum needs is not marked by either efficiency or equity.

Slater concluded his survey by saying: "the Indian worker earns very low wages, has a very low standard of expenditure, and attains a very low level of efficiency, and these characteristics of Indian life are so inter-connected, that it is impossible to say which is cause rather than effect. Indian employers do not believe in the Economy of High Wages; and as yet only faint beginnings of trade unionism are to be found among Indian manual workers. Nor does Indian popular religion... nor popular philosophy... encourage a revolt against prevailing conditions...... In fact various strands of economic, social and religious conditions and customs are strangely and deftly inter-woven in the web of South Indian life, and low wages, low efficiency, and high abstinence are the ground plan of the pattern". Slater will now find more "efficiency", limited but visible, in the sense of increases to production and productivity and notice that, in the process, more employment has been created for labour in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations. But he will also find that real wages of agricultural workers and incomes of marginal cultivators are still so low that massive poverty continues despite more employment and 'efficiency'. To the list of factors that do not "encourage a revolt against prevailing conditions" he might add popular politics to popular religion and popular philosophy. He might enlarge the notion of the abstinence of manual workers to include the State's "abstinence" from enforcing legally enacted land reform. Nevertheless, with some modifications, the ground plan of the pattern of poverty that he perceived in Iruvelpattu will remain recognisable.

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Notes

/We are grateful to S.S.Sivakumar and to colleagues in the Madras Institute of Development Studies in particular C.T.Kurien, K.Nagaraj and V.K.Ramachandran for very helpful comments./

1/ The village is spelt as "Eruvellipet" by the post office and in earlier surveys; as Iruvelipet in the revenue records and as Iruvelipattu in the Census; we spell it as Iruvelpattu which corresponds to the usage in the village and to its Tamil name on the sign post. Its situation between the two rivers viz., the Pennar and Malattar has been hypothesised to account for its name as a village lying between two natural fences (Iru-veli meaning two-fences) but there was an explanation too for Iru-vel viz., that there was once a figure of the god Murugan in this village holding two spears (Iru-vel) instead of the usual one.

2/ Gilbert Slater (ed.), Some South Indian Villages, Oxford University Press 1918. Other Tamilnadu villages in the collection were Vadamalaipuram (Ramanathapuram district), Gangaikondan (Tirunelveli), Palakkurichi (Thanjavur) and Dusi (N.Arcot).

3/ P.J.Thomas and K.C.Ramakrishnan (ed.), Some South Indian Villages: A Resurvey University of Madras 1940.

4/ M.R.Haswell Economics of Development in Village India Routledge and Kegan Paul 1961.

5/ John Harriss Capitalism and Peasant Farming: Agrarian Structure and Ideology in Northern Tamilnadu Oxford University Press 1982 p.319.

6/ The latter was Harriss' hypothesis in his study of 'Randam'. Op. cit. p.324. See also Robert Chambers and John Harriss 'Comparing Twelve South Indian Villages: in Search of Practical Theory' in B.H.Farmer (ed.), Green Revolution? Technology and Change in Rice-growing Areas of Tamilnadu and Sri Lanka. Mac Millan 1977 for a discussion of factors affecting population growth at the village level.

7/ The hypothesis here is that the inter-regional factors pointed out by Bardhan may operate as well at an inter-communal level in the village. See P.Bardhan "On A Life and Death Question", Economic and Political Weekly, Special Number, August 1974.

8/ The 1981 Census figures are male literacy 48.5 per cent and female literacy 19.9 per cent.

9/ We brought these facts to the notice of the District Collector and renewed Slater's plea for one more well in the colony. The wheels of government have not so far moved in this matter.

10/ On this subject, Goran Djurfeldt and Staffan Lindberg Pills Against Poverty Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies 1975 and S.Guhan Health in Tamilnadu : Facts and Issues Madras Institute of Development Studies October 1981 will be of interest.

11/ Pursuing this observation, K.N.Raj had speculated that "the explanation of the apparently perverse trend" was that "the new technology made so much difference to returns at the margin that it was no longer worth their (i.e., the landlord's) while to get cultivated with hired labour any of the dry land in their possession. Leasing it out to tenants was perhaps not attractive enough in view of the lower rent obtainable from dry land and the risks associated with such leasing out". See K.N.Raj Village India and its Political Economy, Sixtieth Anniversary Commemoration Lecture at the Department of Economics, University of Madras, November 15, 1976. Raj has extensively drawn upon evidence from the surveys of Iruvelpattu and of other Slater villages in Tamilnadu in this lecture.

12/ The Statistical Atlas of the Madras State (1950-51) reports that improved varieties for paddy, sugarcane, cotton and ragi were commonly in use in S.Arcot.

13/ In Chengalpattu district Joan Mencher found that many land owners had switched over from paddy and millets to sugarcane and fuel crops due to the land ceiling legislation in the early 1960s. Joan P. Mencher Agriculture and Social Structure in Tamilnadu Allied Publishers 1978 p.115.

14/ A kalam is 36 Madras Measures (MM) or 42.9Kg. A cawni is 1.33 acres.

15/ Estimates of gross output vary widely. In the B.H.Farmer study, average annual yields in the 12 sample villages (1973-74) came to 1.4 tonnes of paddy per acre under HYVs but in 'Randam', John Harriss reported 1.8 tonnes (John Harriss op.cit. p.102). In another village study S.S.Sivakumar reported maximum yields of 2.6 to 3.0 tonnes of paddy per acre (1976, Chengalpattu district) and minimum yields of less than 200 Kg per acre. See S.S.Sivakumar 'Aspects of Agrarian Economy in Tamil-Nadu : A Study of Two Villages' in Economic and Political Weekly, May 13, 1978 p.814.

16/ Between 1970-71 and 1978-79, the total number of energised pumpsets in Tamilnadu has increased from 5.29 lakhs to 8.43 lakhs. In this respect, Tamilnadu has been far ahead of other States in India and accounts for about 50 per cent of all electrified pumpsets in all-India. See Government of Tamilnadu, Tamilnadu - An Economic Appraisal, 1979 p.128.

17/ This is also the standard rate reported by Joan Mencher (op. cit. p.85) and by John Harriss (op. cit. p.158).

18/ The Tamilnadu Electricity Board's estimate of the actual cost of supply of a unit of electricity to the pumpset is 47 paise as compared to the tariff of 12 paise for small farmers (with less than 5 acres of land) and 15 paise for others. On the basis of our estimates, the subsidy works out to Rs.64 per acre per month for the larger farmer. In selling water, the seller realises the equivalent of 67.5 paise per unit or 4.5 times the tariff he is charged.

19/ 120 Kg of 17:17:17 (NPK) and 44 Kg of Urea at the recommended dosage per acre of paddy costs Rs.424 at current prices.

20/ John Harriss also reports a similar level of tax incidence in his crop budget estimates for 'Randam' (op. cit. p.312).

21/ Senior BL died of gunshot wounds sustained in the village. The culprit was believed to be a gypsy set up by some aggrieved tenants. In the accounts we received this episode had the characteristic of elemental protest in response to elemental tyranny.

22/ Extensive areas were acquired at market value from landlords for State Seed Farms in Tamilnadu in the late 1950s prior to the land ceiling legislation. The effect was to soften a blow that was never really delivered.

23/ The Tamilnadu Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling on Land) Act of 1961 fixed the ceiling at 30 standard areas. This was subsequently reduced to 15 standard areas under the Tamilnadu Land Reforms (Reduction of Ceiling Land) Act of 1970.

24/ Substantial lands continue to be held in other villages but of these we have no estimates.

25/ A patta is a record of ownership holdings under a single or several names.

26/ Joint pattas also provide a means for hiding the exact extent of ownership since they do not indicate the individual names of the joint owners.

27/ Gilbert Slater op. cit. p.244.

28/ Joan P. Mencher op. cit. p.68.

29/ Comparable figures reported by John Harriss for 'Randam' will be interesting. 34.5 per cent of pumpsets were owned by households with less than 5 acres, 46.4 per cent by those with 5-20 acres and 19.1 per cent by those owning over 20 acres.

30/ The Statistical Atlas for Madras State (1950-51) points out that "the value of land went down considerably during the close of the decade ending 1930-31 owing to a general economic depression in trade and the fall in prices of foodgrains and groundnut etc. It slightly increased during the decade ending 1940-41".

31/ This phenomenon of large landowners letting out small pieces of land to a number of tenants has been acutely analysed by S.S.Sivakumar in his study of Asthapuram-Kanthapuram. He points out: "One other way in which the big peasant ensures the availability of labour is through leasing out small plots of his land to the landless peasants... This system has certain larger implications.. it would suffice to point out that this group of landless peasants also serves as the mediator and buffer during times of tension between big peasants and landless peasants... their temporary transition to the status of petty peasants (and the desire to make it last) forces them to develop loyalties to their employers". S.S.Sivakumar op. cit. Economic and Political Weekly May 6, 1978 p.767.

32/ The higher rate charged by BL perhaps represents an element of insurance of pre-payment in the context of possible forced or voluntary divestiture in the future.

33/ See S. Subramanian and V.K.Ramachandran Agricultural Labourers in the Working Population of Rural Tamilnadu: Preliminary Results from the Censuses of 1961, 1971 and 1981 Madras Institute of Development Studies June 1982 for a discussion of the trends and the definitional problems.

34/ The salariat will be true of other similar villages also although perhaps not to its extent in Iruvelpattu. Goran Djurfeldt and Staffan Lindberg in their study of Thaiyur village in Chengalpattu found a number of "new" occupations which reflect in part a "modernized" distribution system (bus driver and conductor, postmaster and postman, and rickshaw-pullers) and in part a growing post-colonial State (police constable, clerk, attender, peon, health visitor). Behind Poverty: The Social Formation in a Tamil Village Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. 1976 p.77.

35/ John Harriss op. cit. p.38.

36/ The decline in the institution of padials and the loosening up of the landlord-padial relationship has also been noticed by Djurfeldt and Lindberg (op. cit. p.128) and by S.S.Sivakumar (op. cit. p.768). Compared to other villages in Tamilnadu where Joan Mencher has worked, her impression is that there are a relatively large number of padials in Iruvelpattu.

37/ These are prices reported in the Statistical Atlas for Madras State (1950-51) for Tirukoilur taluk in which Iruvelpattu is located.

38/ Sivakumar points out in this connection "Many petty peasants and landless peasants were forced to sell their cattle and even cooking utensils during these months. The result was their near ruin" S.S.Sivakumar op. cit. p.820.

39/ There is mutuality of interest between BL and other landowners using hired labour in keeping wages low but this should not be exaggerated as there is also a conflict of interest when it comes to securing labour in the peak season. We also found that in adjacent villages there was no single dominant landlord corresponding to BL.

40/ In 'Randam' actual consumption figures in sample family budgets ranged between 233 gms and 560gms per c.u. per day with a modal value between 300 and 350. John Harriss op. cit. p.304.

41/ T.S.Yeshwanth 'Income and Levels of Living in Some South Indian Villages' in Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics Vol.XVIII No.I, Jan-March 1963. Also, Djurfeldt and Lindberg op. cit. p.89. NSS 28th Round estimates for Tamilnadu (rural) indicate a comparable proportion of 53 per cent on cereals as against 48 per cent in these estimates.

42/ *Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85* p.51.

43/ This is also the evidence from other villages in Tamilnadu. See Tamilnadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore *Social Forestry Project in Tamilnadu: Summary Report*, 1982.

44/ This rate is widely prevalent in Tamilnadu.

45/ *The Statistical Atlas for Madras State (1950-51)* reports that the average area cultivated by a pair of draught cattle is 7 acres in Tirukoilur Taluk.

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